

**In Search of Social Justice through *Ubuntu*: A Critical Analysis of Zimbabwe's
Post-colonial Education for All (EFA) Policy.**

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Abstract:

This thesis is an analysis of Education for All (EFA) as Zimbabwe's post-colonial education policy. Discourse on Zimbabwe's post-colonial education system, particularly between 1980 and 1995 tends to be a positive one, often laced with the idea that Zimbabwe's education system was highly successful in addressing inequalities that had been characteristic of the colonial education system. While it can be argued that there is some measure of 'truth' in this narrative, no apparent research has been conducted to date, specifically assessing the social justice imperatives of the claimed educational successes. As such, the aim of this research, particularly given the historic inequalities and imbalances of the colonial era, was, firstly, to establish whether the EFA policy in Zimbabwe reflects *Ubuntu* social justice? Secondly, whether by implementing this policy the government has succeeded in making Zimbabwe's education more socially just.

In a deliberate effort to avoid imperialistic and colonising research methodologies, this research has adopted an Afrocentric paradigm. *Ubuntu* as a Southern African concept of being (personhood) was used as both an analytical lens and methodology for analysing the EFA policy. This research is therefore ground-breaking, both methodologically and in terms of the research focus. It is my contribution to the on-going discourse on social justice education in formally colonised and oppressed communities.

This research found that while Zimbabwe achieved unprecedented outcomes in terms of educational expansion, access and raising literacy levels, the government failed to reform the system in terms of its social justice agenda. While the EFA policy was premised on education as a human right and therefore foundationally consistent with an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice, it still failed to address social justice issues from an *Ubuntu* perspective as it remained anchored on a Euro-Western conceptualisation of human rights as individualistic. This research also concluded that challenges in reforming the education system, particularly the curriculum; were caused by a 'passive revolution' which failed to transform the colonial socio-economic, and political infrastructure. Consequently, the foundations for an *Ubuntu* informed socially just education system do not yet exist in Zimbabwe.

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Acronyms:

CCCU	Canterbury Christ Church University
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
CIET	Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training
EDF	Education Development Fund
EFA	Education for All
EWP	Education with Production
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GOZ	Government of Zimbabwe
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
MHTESTD	Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development
MoPSE	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
MoESAC	Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts & Culture
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDESD	United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All
ZIMSEC	Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council
ZIMASSET	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-economic Transformation
ZJC	Zimbabwe Junior Certificate

Acknowledgement:

In 1977, at the height of the war of independence in Rhodesia I found myself out of school, with very limited options particularly given that my father was still in political detention and my mother, unemployed and living in rural areas where most schools had been closed due to the war. The future was bleak and to think that one day I would be completing a Doctorate was unimaginable. Two special ladies deserve the credit for keeping me focused and hopeful. Firstly, my mother Roda Maphosa who remained steadfast and resilient in keeping the whole family going but also upholding my father's values about the importance of education. Secondly, my aunt Naomi Chulu, who literally took the responsibility of looking after me and sending me to school. Her words, “--- never compare yourself to anybody but your dreams”, have remained my mantra till this day. Without these two strong women, the journey that has taken me this far would never have been embarked on.

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Chapter 1

General Introduction.

1.1: Personal Motivation.

I was born in Rhodesia (formerly Southern Rhodesia) in October 1965, just nineteen days before the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), when the Ian Smith government declared that Rhodesia, a British territory in Southern Africa, now regarded itself as an independent sovereign state. Through UDI, Ian Smith and his government sought to strengthen their grip on power and dominance over the Africans amid decolonisation and the winds of change sweeping across Africa (Zvobgo, 1981). This was the same period when African nationalists, my father included, were intensifying their demands for independence. For his political activism which included challenging the colonial regime in the quest for self-rule and governance, my father was detained by the colonial regime. He was to remain a political detainee until 1978, when he was released, only on condition that he agreed to leave the country and accept a scholarship to study in Britain. Consequently, I spent most of my childhood with an absentee father and therefore experienced first-hand the injustices of the colonial regime. My childhood was therefore lived in a crucible of struggle, conflict and war. My educational experiences were equally tumultuous, having done my primary education under the colonial education system punctuated with school closures and expulsions due to unpaid school fees while my secondary and tertiary education came after independence. Because of these childhood experiences, I have always been conflicted in my conceptualisation of my experiences of the historical realities that have framed and shaped both my particularity, individuality, historicity and sense of belonging (Identity as *umuntu*, discussed in chapter three).

On the one hand, like most ordinary black Rhodesian children, I desired to be like the whites who seemed then, to have all the privileges anyone could ever ask for; to receive the best possible education and aspire for a professional job like my father, who had been a teacher before becoming

a politician. On the other hand, I was very conscious from a very young age (credit to my mother) that what appeared to be the ideal, as represented by the white community, was in fact an unjust system that my father had sacrificed his and our livelihoods to dismantle. I was therefore resentful of the very thing that deep in my spirit I desired. So, going through the education system, I was always mindful of this quest for social justice. I might not have articulated it as such, particularly in my teenage years but that confliction was always at the forefront of my reality. It was this conflict within that inspired me to pursue education as a vehicle for social justice. After all, education was the only thing that my father could give me while he was locked up as a political detainee. Every letter that I received from him always concluded with a call never to give up on education, no matter the challenges we were experiencing. This research, therefore, is a continuation of this conflicted self and a deep sense of and attempt to resolve this conflict. It is this quest for a more just education system that informs the aims of this research.

1.2: Research Aims and questions.

The introduction of Education for All (EFA) as Zimbabwe's post-colonial education policy's move towards universal education has been credited for the unprecedented 'success' that saw Zimbabwe's literacy rate rise to 92% by the year 2000, then one of the highest in Africa (Galabawa, 2001). Discourse on Zimbabwe's post-colonial education system, particularly between 1980 and 1995 is often a positive one. Reports from the Ministry of Education (1985), (GOZ, 1983, 1985, 1990) and international organisations such as UNESCO (Maravanyika, 1990), 2001, World Bank (1988), SIDA (1990) amongst others concur on this positive narrative; a narrative of success, normally given as an example of one of the best post-colonial education success stories on the African continent. This narrative is often laced with the idea that Zimbabwe's education system was highly successful in addressing inequalities that had been characteristic of the colonial education system. While it can be argued that there is some measure of 'truth' in this narrative, no apparent research has been

conducted to date, specifically assessing the social justice imperatives of the claimed educational successes using Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM).

Of significance to this thesis is that the EFA programme is not unique to Zimbabwe as it is an international education agenda that has been adopted in most so-called developing countries with different foci and to varying degrees of success (Rao, 2007; Mundy & Manion, 2015). This is a policy borrowed from the conceptual West. It is a brainchild of the international community, led by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. This was in response to the lack of 'progress' in educational development despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), where basic education had been declared a human right (Rao, 2007; Mundy & Manion, 2015). The World Conference on Education for All (Jomtein, Thailand, 5 – 9 March 1990) had sought to draw the world's attention to the importance and significance of basic education as both a human right and its developmental efficacy. Zimbabwe as one of the 155 participating countries at this conference signed up to this global initiative. It is important to observe that while Zimbabwe formally signed up to this global initiative in 1990, its education policy since 1980 was informed by the same principles of education as a human right (Maravanyika, 1990). The same international organisations (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank, SIDA) that sponsored the World Conference on EFA had been advising and supporting the government of Zimbabwe from 1980. Reporting on the developments in the education sector in Zimbabwe between 1990 and 2000 UNESCO observes that to redress the inequalities and discriminatory practices of successive colonial governments; *'the post-independence Republic of Zimbabwe government adopted the policy of education as a basic human right, and committed itself to universal and equal educational opportunity for all'* (2001, p. 7).

Predicated on Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 (Rao, 2007) the adoption of this education policy direction locates and centres any discourse on post-colonial

education in Zimbabwe in the realm of social justice. It is this connection between the EFA policy and the idea that education is a human right that is of interest to this research and makes this policy worth analysing. With EFA viewed and therefore justified as a social justice issue, this research endeavours to develop an Afrocentric conceptualisation of social justice to re-centre the discourse contextually. This re-centring is vital to the success of this project given that the policy itself is borrowed from the conceptual West.

The aims of this research, particularly given the historic inequalities and imbalances of the colonial era, and the research questions thereof are motivated by my personal educational experiences in Rhodesia and in Zimbabwe after independence as noted above. I experienced both colonial and post-colonial education first-hand as a student and taught in both secondary and tertiary educational institutions after independence. As will be discussed in detail in chapter five, the colonial education system in Rhodesia had been designed to support a dual society predicated on racial inequality between blacks and whites. This colonial legacy of inequality and social injustice forms the bedrock of this thesis which is a quest for social justice in post-colonial education. At independence in 1980, the new government of Zimbabwe was clear that the education sector had to be reformed to make it more socially just (Zimbabwe Transitional National Development Plan Vol. 2 (1982/3) (Maravanyika, 1990), Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) [ZANU PF] Election Manifesto (1980, 1985) (see appendices A, C & D for details). The introduction of the EFA policy was part of this move towards social justice in education. Such a policy shift was predicated on the commitment by African Nations attending the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) 1961 conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; where African Nations agreed to reverse the discriminatory colonial education policies by instituting universal education (Nhundu, 1992). This research therefore aims to critique the EFA policy considering its social justice agenda. This is a significant starting point given that EFA (understood in the context of basic universal education as a human right) became the official policy position of both the ruling ZANU (PF) party (Election manifesto, 1980, 1985) and Government.

International organisations such as the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank and other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) directed their funding towards specific goals within this policy (Maravanyika, 1990; UNESCO, 2001). The origins of the EFA policy as a brainchild of the conceptual West and the continued involvement of International organisations is equally relevant to this research. Was the EFA policy a genuine decolonising agenda or just a mask on coloniality? Coloniality is here understood to be ‘--- *the underlying logic of the foundation and unfolding of Western civilisation from the Renaissance to today of which historical colonialisms have been a constitutive, although downplayed, dimension*’ Mignolo, 2011, p. 2). This is what Mignolo (2011) identifies as the ‘darker side’ of modernity.

Equally significant is my desire to bring a decolonising methodology into this research. As such, this research has adopted an Afrocentric paradigm (Asante, 1989, Chilisa, 2012). Afrocentrism in this thesis is not just an alternative within a modernist worldview; rather it is an alternative to modernity as a Eurocentric concept. It speaks to an option in terms of both ontologies and epistemologies. *Ubuntu* as a Southern African concept of being (personhood) is used as both an analytic lens and methodology for analysing the EFA policy. I am therefore cognisant of the value of adopting an indigenous research methodological position that is relevant to the researcher’s context. As someone born and educated in Zimbabwe in the period I am researching, I am part of the researched and therefore, enter the research process with data that contributes to this research process. Data collection methods are therefore cyclical and recursive as opposed to linear and closed.

My quest for social justice is therefore not only in the subject of my research but also in the research methodology employed. Consequently, my methodological aims are two-fold; firstly, a recognition that the people of Southern Africa of which Zimbabwe is part, call themselves *abantu*. This is a relational concept of being or personhood, ontologically, epistemologically and axiologically (discussed in chapter three). As such, any theory of social justice used in analysing the EFA policy in

Zimbabwe must be reflective of *Ubuntu* philosophy otherwise it becomes a merely colonising exercise. The aim here is to develop a theory of social justice informed by *Ubuntu* (discussed in chapters three and four). Secondly, once an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice is developed, it is used as an interpretive and analytical device for the EFA policy. This second aim, which also outlines the two research questions is designed to establish, firstly, whether the EFA policy reflects an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice and secondly, whether by implementing this policy the post-independence government of Zimbabwe has made education more socially just. This aim is informed by a recognition of the colonial realities of injustice in the education system and an education system that was designed to further embed injustices in every aspect of society. This research therefore seeks to develop a theory of social justice that is reflective of the people of Zimbabwe, with the overall purpose being to inform future education policies that could transform Zimbabwe's education system into *Ubuntu* education. The research is therefore ground-breaking both methodologically and in terms of the research focus. It is my contribution to the on-going discourse on social justice education in formally colonised and oppressed communities.

1.3: Thesis Statement.

A lot has been said and written about education and social justice, particularly the ideas on teaching for social justice (Freire, 1970; Battiste, 1998; Kincheloe, 2008; Mignolo, 2000, 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Grand narratives and initiatives such as Teach for All, Teach Africa, Teach First, Education for All and many more are being globalised in attempts to make education the vehicle for 'social justice'. Yet the bulk of these initiatives and the associated literature are underpinned by the same logic that underpins modernity which is colonising ontologically and epistemologically. A view underscored by Asante (1987, 1988) in his justification for the need for Afrocentricity when analysing African culture and thought and Chilisa (2012) in her call for African researchers to employ indigenous research methodologies.

African worldviews and knowledge systems have been dismissed by Western scholars such as van Binsbergen (2001) amongst others. This is because as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) contends, the imperial reasoning that reduced Africans into a subhuman category, equally denied them of any epistemic freedom. Ndlovu-Gatsheni defines epistemic freedom as; ‘--- *fundamentally about the right to think, theorize, interpret the world, develop own methodologies and write from where one is located and unencumbered by Eurocentrism*’ (2018, p. 3) The fact that scholars like van Binsburgen (2001) are dismissive of *Ubuntu* as an authentic Southern African philosophy of being, vindicates those like Chilisa (2012), Banks (1992) and Asante (1991) who have challenged African scholars to be Afrocentric in their research philosophy. In this thesis I want to look at social justice in education from an Afrocentric ontological and epistemological perspective. Asante (1988) echoed by Chilisa (2012) warn us against using research methodologies that are colonising, especially when researching historically oppressed people groups. In this thesis, *Ubuntu* theory of social justice is used as an interpretive and analytic device in my quest for social justice in Zimbabwe’s post-colonial education system. I also want to argue that there can be no social justice in education without epistemic freedom.

Considering my methodological positioning, I invite the reader to imagine this thesis as a story being told in an Afrocentric setting, which it is. As such there is a sense in which some sections will sound repetitive. While this might be problematic to those of Euro-Western methodological positioning, this is typical of a relational cyclic epistemology underpinning this research (developed in Chapter two). Its cyclical recursive nature demands that important points are repeated as a matter of both style and agency. Repetition is characteristic of oral forms of communicating and passing on information from generation to generation (Chilisa, 2012). As traditionally, knowledge was passed orally, repetition ensured important information was committed to memory and helped the listener identify the main elements of what was communicated, that which needed to be retained and passed on. In addressing the point above Mignolo (2011, p. xxiii) observes that, ‘[a] linear argument

cannot capture the nuances, since once a name or a paragraph is mentioned or quoted in a linear flow, it does not return: repetitions are not good in English composition but are important in decolonial thinking'. To stay 'true' to these epistemic and methodological nuances, I have kept this cyclical, recursive and at times repetitive style.

1.4: Thesis Structure.

The thesis has been organised into eleven chapters. Chapter one presents a general introduction of the entire thesis. In chapter two, I set out the methodology used in this study; its justification, ontological and epistemological positioning and methods used in collecting and processing data. I adopt Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM) as the authentic approach to looking at social justice in Zimbabwe's education system. *Ubuntu* as a Southern African philosophy of personhood has been adopted as both an analytical lens and a methodology in my quest for social justice in Zimbabwe's Education for All policy (EFA). This is a ground-breaking conceptualisation of the theory and hence my contribution to the discourse on social justice education amongst the formally colonised communities.

Chapter three focuses on unpacking the Southern African concept of *Ubuntu*. This concept is anchored on a relational ontology, relational epistemology and relational axiological African philosophy of what it means to be human (*Umntu*) (Samukange & Samukange, 1980; Menkiti, 1984, 2004; Gyekye, 1992, 1995; Ramose, 2002; Metz, 2007; Metz & Gaie, 2010; Chilisa, 2012; Gade, 2012; Murove, 2014; Oviawe, 2016). In unpacking this concept, I lay the foundations for the development of an *Ubuntu* informed theory of social justice. It is this theory of social justice that will be used to critically review the EFA policy and underpin the main argument in this thesis.

Chapter four builds on chapter three in developing an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. At the core of this theory is the understanding that personhood is both a human quality and a relational state of

being; created by the duality that emanates from the individual and the community to which the individual belongs. In this light *Ubuntu* is a state of being (particularity) becoming (developmental) and belonging (community) (Samukange & Samukange, 1980; Menkiti, 1984; Gyekye, 1992, 1995; Chilisa, 2012; Molefe, 2017). (*umuntu* is a person while *abantu* refers to a group of people). Social justice therefore is a relational concept reflecting the quality of the relationship the individual (*umuntu*) has with the community. It is here discussed in terms of respect for Self and Other, and respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging (Gyekye, 1995; Louw, 2001; Chilisa, 2012; Molefe, 2017). I argue here that *Ubuntu* social justice is not a quality of an individual, but rather, it is what makes a person a human being (*umuntu*). In this light being socially just is what makes *abantu*, *abantu qua Ubuntu*.

To provide a context to the EFA policy, chapter five discusses colonial education in Zimbabwe. This provides a background to why there was a need for a radical policy shift at independence in 1980. In this chapter, I also demonstrate the colonial departure from an *Ubuntu* worldview, thus necessitating change (Atkinson, 1972; Chikombah, 1981; Richards & Govere, 2003; Kanyongo, 2005). The aim of this chapter is to develop an understanding of the colonial legacy in order to identify contemporary practices that reaffirm the prevalence of coloniality in the post-colonial era. Any transformative plan for the future must come from an analysis of these historical and contemporaneous issues (Oviawe, 2016).

Chapter six focuses on Zimbabwe's post-colonial EFA policy (Zimbabwe Transitional National Development Plan Vol. 2 (1982/3) (see appendix A & B). This policy document together with the EFA review documents (Maravanyika, 1990) offers a detailed outline of Zimbabwe's post-colonial education policy and the underpinning rationale. Also, relevant, is the ZANU (PF) Election Manifesto (1980, 1985) (see appendix C & D); Ministry of Education official communications and official addresses by the minister of Education and Culture between 1980 and 1990. Trying to make sense of

this policy through an *Ubuntu* lens will enable me to provide an interpretation and analysis of the policy both in terms of its relevance, utility and agency. The foci of this chapter are in outlining what the EFA policy was about and what aspects of the colonial education system it was designed to address and why?

Chapter seven is the first of the three discussion chapters in this thesis. Here I begin by exploring whether the EFA policy as implemented in Zimbabwe reflects any *Ubuntu* social justice principles as discussed in chapter three and four. This chapter takes the form of an appraisal of the policy, identifying aspects of it that might be consistent with an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. Central to the findings is that because the EFA policy is founded on the principle that education is a human right (Rao, 2007), it is in this light consistent with *Ubuntu* theory of social justice in so far as it acknowledges respect for both individuality and human dignity (Gyekye, 1995; Molefe, 2017). However, in terms of its practical implementation, the policy did not go far enough as *Ubuntu* social justice reflects the relational interplay between respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belongingness (Chilisa, 2012; Molefe, 2017). Secondly, the EFA policy as a concept driven by the conceptual West appears to be trapped within the logic of modernity/coloniality with its focus on historical post-colonialism rather than decolonisation. In this light it fails in delivering social justice as defined under an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice which is a decolonial option.

Chapter eight focuses on the educational goals as set out in the Zimbabwe Transitional National Development Plan Vol. 2 (1982/3) (see appendix A). This policy document is significant not only as an education policy document but also, in giving an overview of the governments holistic National Development plan post-independence. Each of the seven development goals offer a specific focus of the education policy and are also linked to the EFA goals as outlined in the policy review documents (see appendix E). Each goal is analysed in the light of its social justice focus as defined in *Ubuntu* theory of social justice discussed in chapter four. Once again, this analysis reveals that the EFA policy failed in reconstructing an indigenous, decolonised education system informed by *Ubuntu* social

justice principles free from both Cognitive Imperialism (Battiste, 2013) and Epistemic Ignorance (Kuokkanen, 2007). I argue that there is need to find an alternative to the logic of coloniality currently inherent in the education system. An education system that is predicated on the logic of injustice cannot be a vehicle for an *Ubuntu* social justice. Without epistemic disobedience to the conceptual West, *Ubuntu* social justice in education is a logical impossibility.

In chapter nine I turn to the key questions in this research. Firstly, whether the EFA policy in Zimbabwe reflects *Ubuntu* social justice? Secondly, whether by implementing this policy the government has succeeded in making Zimbabwe's education more socially just? Here I observe that the progress made as far as access and expansion are concerned, reflects *Ubuntu* social justice. However, this was access to and expansion of the same colonial education system that had already been condemned as socially unjust (Chung & Ngara, 1985; Jansen, 1991). There is a sense in which it can be argued that the gains made under the EFA policy clouded reality and blinded Zimbabweans to the unjust colonial legacies that they now seem to happily embrace and willingly pursue.

In chapter ten I look at the limitations of this research and the recommendations for both future research and what can be done to develop a socially just education system in independent Zimbabwe. The main limitation of this research is that it has relied on secondary sources as a basis for the analysis. My recommendations are therefore that there is need for an in-depth study that combines the secondary sources used in this study and qualitative primary data collection focussing on perceptions of the different stakeholders to Zimbabwe's education system.

My other set of recommendations focused on developing a socially just education system are that there is need for an *Ubuntu* informed review of the education system: focussing on specific social justice issues; the need to change the way schools are funded; the need to address gender imbalances across the education sector; the need for a more inclusive education system for children with specific educational needs; the need for a balance between quantity and quality of provision; the need for a relevant curriculum and the need to place schools at the heart of every community.

Such a review would lay a foundation for *Ubuntu* social justice that is built on respect for individuality and human dignity, respect for particularity, historicity and belongingness.

I conclude this thesis by positing that while Zimbabwe achieved unprecedented outcomes in terms of educational expansion, access and raising literacy levels, the government failed to reform the system in terms of its social justice agenda. While the EFA policy was premised on education as a human right and therefore foundationally consistent with an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice, it still failed to address social justice issues from an *Ubuntu* perspective as it remained anchored on a Euro-Western conceptualisation of human rights as individualistic. This research also concluded that challenges in reforming the education system, particularly the curriculum; were caused by a 'passive revolution' which failed to transform the colonial socio-economic, and political infrastructure. Consequently, the foundations for an *Ubuntu* informed socially just education system do not yet exist in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 2

Methodology.

2.1: Introduction.

In this chapter I set out the methodology used in this study; its justification, ontological and epistemological positioning and methods used in collecting and processing data. Given that this is a theoretical study, breaking new ground methodologically, it is imperative to engage with its theoretical underpinnings. As Crotty (1998, p. 1) warns us; *'...methodologies and methods are not usually laid out in a highly organised fashion and may appear more as a maze than as pathways to orderly research'*. This claim by Crotty is even truer for those engaging in Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM) as this is a departure from established Euro-Western research traditions. Explaining this dichotomy, Chilisa argues that: *'...current academic research traditions are founded on the culture, history, and philosophies of Euro-Western thought and are therefore indigenous to the Western academy and its institutions'* (2012, p. 1). As such, these methodologies tend to exclude from knowledge production any knowledge systems that are non-Western (Chilisa, 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Consequently, I discuss in greater depth how my methodology and methods are underpinned by my ontological and epistemological positioning as one engaged with Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM). In doing so, I address two questions identified by Crotty (1998) as important in developing one's research. Firstly, *'--- what methodologies and methods will we be employing in the research we propose to do? Secondly, how do we justify this choice and use of methodologies and methods?'* (Crotty, 1998, p. 2). Finally, I show how the chosen methodology and method seek to address the purpose of this research, leading to the transformation of both the researcher and the research subject. This is because I adopt a relational understanding of the research process. Before I discuss this methodology, it is imperative that this methodological choice is justified.

2.2: Justification for chosen Methodology.

It is arguable that one of the biggest challenges to researchers, particularly those researching on post-colonial Africa and other indigenous peoples across the world has been on what methodology to use in their studies. This is because research has over the years become an institution in its own right and has been used by those in power to consolidate and justify their power. As Smith (2012) as well as Chilisa (2012), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) amongst others would argue, all research methodologies are part of the social and cultural history of the dominant group and therefore can be used to reinforce their culture, values, practices and ultimately, power relations; it is a political act.

The danger arises when those in power, methodologically speaking, assume that their vantage point is the only way of looking at the world and therefore doing research.

When ontological and epistemic hegemony is used to silence the voices of the rest of the world as though it never existed; this leads to what both Asante (1998) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) would call methodological imperialism. I am therefore entering this field as one who is cognisant of the fact that there are other ways of being in the world and apprehending phenomena other than those of the historically dominant groups which are primarily Euro-Western in orientation. I concur with Asante (1998) Chilisa (2012) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2018) position when they argue that current research traditions are predominantly indigenous to Western academy and its institutions. It is therefore imperative that we recast our vantage point if our research is to be relevant to those who are the subject of our research. In this light I have chosen a research methodology that resonates with the history, culture, values and philosophies of the Zimbabwean people. This is because to adopt a Euro-Western research methodology would perpetuate the exclusion from knowledge production the knowledge systems of the Zimbabwean people as *'abantu'*. Ndlovu-Gatsheni reminds us that *'Africans,'* and I want to argue Zimbabweans, *'---were never absent --- always had their own valid, legitimate and useful knowledge systems and education systems'* (2018, p. 1).

The adoption of an *Ubuntu* methodology allows me to locate or place *Ubuntu* ideals at the centre of my critique, analysis and interpretation of the EFA policy in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Such a positioning achieves two things. Firstly, it ensures that the research is historically authentic (Asante, 1998; Mkabela, 2005). It is ‘historically authentic’ in the sense that the historical and socio-cultural capital accrued to *abantu* is not dismissed as irrelevant but rather is used to provide insights into indigenous understandings of social justice issues. It allows me to draw from the long ontological and epistemic history of the Zimbabwean people before their encounter with colonialism. Secondly, conceptual authenticity is achieved. By drawing on an Afrocentric *worldview*, the methodology makes effort to safeguard against conceptual imperialism which would otherwise undermine the validity of the interpretations proffered. One of the major limitations of a Euro- Western oriented methodology when used to research formerly colonised, marginalised and oppressed people is that it commits what I would call the ‘fallacy of universalisability’. By this I mean, it makes the assumptions that what is held to be ‘true’ in the Euro-Western ways of thinking is the correct and only measure by which the world must be perceived and hence understood. What Asante calls ‘--- *the myth of universalism, objectivity and classical traditions*’ (1998, p.10). Mignolo calls it the ‘*Mirage of Universalism behind European Localism*’ (2018, p. 1).

Chilisa (2012, p. 8) further observes that Euro-Western research paradigms tend to ‘...*ignore the role of imperialism, colonisation, and globalisation in the construction of knowledge*’. The argument being that the values and assumptions underpinning, imperialism, colonisation and globalisation are colonising. This is what Mignolo (2011) calls the colonial matrix of power or coloniality. As such the same values, and assumptions inform Euro-Western research methodologies and hence are equally colonising when applied to other cultures and knowledge systems (Asante, 1998; Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017, 2018). Colonising in the sense that while they are local to the Euro-Western context, they are portrayed as though they were universal. In so doing they perpetuate epistemic violence against other indigenous/local knowledge systems. An *Ubuntu* methodology as an indigenous option is decolonising and thus more appropriate for this research.

As both Asante (1998) and Chilisa (2012) would argue, indigenous research methodologies are motivated by the desire to resist Euro-Western methodological imperialism and use methodologies that deliberately seeks to empower both the researcher and the researched. What Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) calls 'Epistemic Freedom'. In this thesis I borrow Chilisa's definition of Indigenous, where *'...the focus is on a cultural group's ways of perceiving reality, ways of knowing, and the value systems that inform research processes'* (Chilisa, 2012, p. 13). It is equally noteworthy that Euro-Western research paradigms would be indigenous or local to Euro-Western societies. As such this is not an exclusivist understanding of the concept.

Given that this research focuses on postcolonial education and references both colonialism and postcolonial concepts, one might wonder why Postcolonial Theory has not been adopted as the legitimate research methodology. While this might appear to be a reasonable claim, it falls into what Mignolo (2018, p. 1) calls *'[t]he mirage of universalism behind European localism'*. The concept of postcoloniality is different from de-coloniality. Postcoloniality resides within the same modernist linear concept of time. The mere fact that the formalised colonial administrative structures have now been removed does not mean decolonisation has taken place. So, to avoid this 'mirage' I have chosen to use *Ubuntu* as a de-colonial methodology whose aims are unmistakable. Postcolonial Theory is still part of the Euro-Western worldview and understanding of progress and development. As such it fails to offer an option to how we view the world that *Ubuntu* offers.

In this research I seek to critically review the 'Education for All' policy (EFA). The goal is to critique and interpret this policy in light of its social justice agenda. I begin on the premise that social justice should be understood within the context of its geo-political, socio-economic and cultural context (Asante, 1988a; Gewirtz, 1998, 2006; Balibar, 2006; Bhabha, 2007; Christie, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2010; Chilisa, 2012; Mignolo, 2000, 2011, 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018)). In this regard, Balibar asserts that: *'...different geo-histories engender profoundly heterogeneous points of view on the same questions of principle'* (2006, p.25). As such, any analysis of a concept of social justice in

Zimbabwe calls for an indigenous Afrocentric theoretical framework that is reflective of the Southern African concept of *Ubuntu*. Given that Africa is not homogenous; adopting an *Ubuntu* theory allows me to centre the discussion within Southern Africa to which Zimbabwe is part. *Ubuntu* as a theory of social justice will thus be used as this legitimate and relevant analytical and interpretive tool.

Accordingly, I begin by addressing the question: what is *Ubuntu* as a theory of social justice?

Secondly, how is *Ubuntu* or any other concept of social justice reflected in Zimbabwe's post-colonial EFA policy? This is a question of relevance and whether the EFA policy is relevant to an Afrocentric conceptualisation of social justice issues. This question arises out of the fact that EFA is part of the post-colonial agenda to address some of the legacies of colonialism by organisations and institutions steeped in the culture, histories and philosophies of modernity; what Mignolo (2011, 2018) calls the logic of coloniality. Under an '*Ubuntu worldview*' can 'education' be education if it is not education for all? Under this question I explore ways in which *Ubuntu* notions of social justice are reflected in the policy. As will be discussed in depth in the next chapter, *Ubuntu* holds a communitarian, relational concept of being (Gade, 2012; Chilisa, 2012; Murove, 2014). The individual's identity is defined in terms of communal identity and the community reflects its members. However, as a relational concept; the whole is more than the sum of its parts. This is because community is not just a collection of individuals, rather, it is how these people relate to each other that defines the community. The saying '*I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am*' (Mbiti, 1969, p. 106) captures the 'essence' of *Ubuntu* philosophy.

Finally, to what extent has the EFA policy shift contributed to a more socially just education system?

While a thorough evaluation of the impact of the EFA policy on Zimbabwe's education system is beyond the scope and methodological approach adopted in this research, it is still fitting to draw some interpretations of the impact of the policy shift from available evaluative data. The effectiveness of any policy can be measured in terms of its impact or limitations thereof. This

evaluation will focus on the extent to which the policy shift addresses social justice issues as defined by *Ubuntu* philosophy.

2.3: Afrocentricity as a Conceptual and Theoretical framework.

The academic origins of Afrocentricity as a worldview are attributed to the works of Molefi Kete Asante; *The Afrocentric Idea* (1988a), *Afrocentricity* (1988b) and *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge* (1990). This is an African-centred worldview that places the African ways of perceiving and knowing reality at par with other traditions of perceiving and ways of knowing reality (Chilisa, 2012). As Chilisa elucidates, *'It is an African-centred worldview, which establishes a conceptual framework for how the world is seen and understood'* (Chilisa, 2012, p. 185). As a culturally located view, it draws on African philosophy and assumptions allowing Africans to free themselves from colonial trappings in the way they see and interpret phenomena. This is the conceptual framework for an *Ubuntu* methodology that has been adopted in this thesis. Reviere posits that: *'In its most fundamental expression, Afrocentrism is the scholar's assuming the right and the responsibility to describe reality from his or her own perspective'* (Reviere, 2001, p. 711). A view supported by Kwesi Prah who advises that *'We cannot in all seriousness study ourselves through the eyes of other people's assumptions. I am not saying we must not know what others know or think of us. I am saying we must think for ourselves like others do for themselves'* (Prah, 1999, p. 6). It is within this context therefore that *Ubuntu* as an Afrocentric methodology is used in the critique and interpretation of the EFA policy in Zimbabwe.

The concepts of EFA and Social Justice are borrowed concepts given their origins in the West. Given the colonial legacy in Zimbabwe and other Southern African countries, it is important to recast how we engage in discourses that can easily mask coloniality. I use the concept of coloniality here to refer to the continued influence of colonialism under the rhetoric of modernity and development (Mignolo, 2011). In examining social justice in post-colonial education in Zimbabwe, I have adopted

the concept of *Ubuntu* as my theoretical lens and methodology. The goal being to develop an indigenous Afrocentric conceptualisation of social justice in education. It is therefore important to underscore the value of avoiding merely mimicking established Euro-Western forms of research methodologies. Decoloniality, which is the deliberate and purposeful effort to expose and challenge coloniality, cannot be achieved through research methodologies that continue to undermine and silence indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. In this vein Ndlovu-Gatsheni talks of how colonialism in the past and coloniality at present has continued with the ‘--- genocides, epistemicides, and cultural imperialism’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, p. 2)

According to Roederer & Moellendorf: ‘...*Ubuntu represents notions of universal human interdependence, solidarity and communalism which can be traced to small-scale communities in pre-colonial Africa, and which underlie virtually every indigenous African culture*’ (2004, p. 441).

While there are many interpretations and hence variances of this concept, I am drawn to the position of *Ubuntu* as a Southern African philosophy of being (Mbiti, 1969; Samkange & Samkange, 1980; Gyekye, 1992, 1995, 1997, 2004, 2014; Ramose, 2007; Murove, 2014; Mangena, 2012b, 2016). While this conceptualisation does not capture the full picture (as no full picture can ever be captured), it suffices in giving us a working understanding of this Southern African indigenous worldview as discussed in depth in chapter three. I posit that social justice is a social phenomenon constructed in every human society and relates to how that society understands all forms of social interactions. It is therefore imperative that to understand social justice in an indigenous Afrocentric context, we need to understand how these people define themselves as humans and *Ubuntu* offers us that point of departure. A theory of social justice underpinned by the concept of *Ubuntu* will thus be employed as an analytic and interpretive tool in unpicking the EFA policy in post-colonial Zimbabwe. *Ubuntu* as a theoretical lens is best understood in the context of its ontological and epistemological groundings. I now turn to my ontological positioning.

2.4: Ontology.

Developing an understanding of my ontological position in this thesis would help to bring clarity to my epistemological positioning, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods used. As a Critical Realist I am of the view that reality does exist independent of the mind, a view well developed by Maxwell (2012). This ontological position is often linked to positivism, an epistemological position implying that objects have meaning in and of themselves, a position implied in Guba and Lincoln (1989). However, this position is rejected by critical realists who argue that meaning making only takes place when humans interact with their world, natural or social (Maxwell, 2012). As Crotty, succinctly sums it; *'[t]he existence of a world without a mind is conceivable. Meaning without a mind is not'* (1998, pp. 10-11). Here Crotty suggests that *'[r]ealism in ontology and constructionism in epistemology turn out to be quite compatible'* (1998, p. 11). This position is further developed by Maxwell when he argues that: *'Critical realists thus retain an ontological realism (there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions, theories, and constructions) while accepting a form of epistemological constructivism and relativism (our understanding of this world is inevitably a construction from our own perspectives and standpoints)'* (Maxwell, 2012, p. 5). This is a very poignant point in this thesis as will be demonstrated as this thesis develops.

Having outlined my 'Euro-Western' informed ontological position, it is its *Ubuntu* informed relational dimension which is of more significance to this research. In conflating the two I have developed what I have termed a 'Relational Critical Realist' ontology. As Datta *et al* (2014) argues, this relational ontology fits with the African paradigm of *Ubuntu* which is also relational. According to Chilisa (2012, p. 109) *'[t]he Ubuntu worldview expresses an ontology that addresses relations among people, relations with the living and the non-living, and a spiritual existence that promotes love and harmony among people and communities'*. The African saying, 'I am we; I am because we are; we are because I am' (Goduka, 2000) captures fully this relational ontological position as it explains the web

of connections among the living and everything else within their reality. This ontological position is in stark contrast with the Euro-Western understanding of humanity where an expression of the self is predominantly individualistic as succinctly captured by the famous French philosopher Rene Descartes in the COGITO (I think therefore I am) (1968). It is worth acknowledging at this point that the Cartesian conceptualisation of the self belongs more to the Enlightenment period and is no longer ‘fully’ representative of current Eurocentric views as some philosophers have contested its validity (Carruthers, 2008, 2010; Prinz, 2011). Notwithstanding this acknowledgement, the point I am making remains valid as it is aimed at illustrating the contrast between *Ubuntu* and Western conceptualisation of self. Commenting on Descartes’ dictum, Goduka (2000, p. 29) notes that this conceptualisation of the self ‘--- is in tune with a monolithic and one-dimensional construction of humanity’. To the contrary in the “I am because we are” principle ‘...the group has priority over the individual without crushing the individual but allowing the individual to blossom as a person’ (Senghor, 1966, p. 5).

If we accept the logic of a relational ontology, it follows that it is not possible to have a single, ‘correct’ or ‘true’ ‘*understanding of the world, what Putnum (1999, cited in Maxwell, 2012, p. 5) describes as a “God’s eye view” that is independent of any particular viewpoint*’. It is this relational ontological position that informs my research design. One of the implications of this relational critical realist understanding of knowledge is that it is always partial, accumulative, dynamic, recursive, location specific and ‘--- reflecting generations of experiences, careful observations, and trial and error experiments’ (Chilisa, 2012, p. 99). That said, every research is an attempt to add more clarity to what is already known about the phenomenon being researched and this research is no exception.

One of the challenges of a relational ontology particularly as expressed by the *Ubuntu* principle of “I am because we are, and we are because I am” is in trying to maintain a balance between the I/We tension. As Chilisa (2012, p. 109) would ask: ‘[h]ow do we construct reality in such a way that the I

does not overshadow the other and the community or the We does not overshadow the I? I want to suggest that the answer might lie in the way indigenous knowledge systems are conceptualised. The way reality is constructed and interpreted to inform the I/We dichotomy might offer meaningful insights into a relational epistemology.

2.5: Epistemology.

In this thesis I adopt a relational constructionist epistemological position (Chilisa, 2012). This relational epistemology perceives knowledge and how we come to know as a process of being and becoming. 'Being' in the sense that all knowledge begins in the context of the reality of what is (the specific historical context), but 'becoming' in the sense that it is in that relational interactive processes that knowledge is constructed and co-constructed in an endless relational and recursive process. In other words, knowing is open ended and thus open to more knowing so to speak. It is the lived experiences of the researcher as he/she interacts with the world of their research (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999; Keane *et al.* 2016). Crotty defines constructionism as *'...the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context'* (1998, p. 42). As such, meaning is not objectively out there waiting for us to discover it, but rather it is constructed through our interactions with our world. Constructionism as a theory of knowledge is consistent with an *Ubuntu* / communalistic way of being. This is because knowledge is not discovered but rather co-constructed as people interact in a mutually beneficial, relational and constructive way. It is significant to underscore the importance of 'what is' / contextual realities / location / place as it is these realities that make up the raw materials of the co-construction process.

The key concepts grappled with here are *Ubuntu*, social justice in education and the EFA policy. These are all social phenomena requiring what Crotty calls *'interpretation as a making of meaning'*

(Crotty, 1998, p. 52). In other words, I will have to reckon with the social origins of all these concepts and equally accept that my interpretation does not constitute all there is to know about these concepts. What is even more important to understand is that these concepts as socially constructed are real phenomena and therefore, it is through interacting with them that we can come to an understanding of what that reality is. Each of these phenomena contributes to the meaning making process that this thesis seeks to achieve in relation to these three social phenomena.

I seek to make sense of social justice in Zimbabwe's education system, through the lens of *Ubuntu* as captured in the EFA policy. Consequently, my focus will be on relational forms of knowing in contrast to individual descriptions of knowing. For instance, what is social justice in an *Ubuntu* social context? How is this *Ubuntu* conceptualisation of social justice reflected in the EFA policy and to what end? It is within this understanding that the research begins with developing an understanding of the concept of *Ubuntu*; this is an ontological question that underpins the entire research. In other words, this relational epistemology will focus on subjects or *abantu* community as knowers rather than the objects of knowledge. Thayer-Bacon observes that in a relational epistemology, knowledge is what people develop;

--- as they have experiences with each other and the world around them. People improve on the ideas that have been developed and passed to them by others. They do so by further developing their own understandings and enlarging their perspectives. With enlarged perspectives, they create new meanings from their experience (Thayer-Bacon, 2003, p. 9).

Chalisa further develops this relational concept of knowing when noting that;

[a]frican perspectives view relational epistemology as knowledge that has a connection with the knowers. It is the well-established general beliefs, concepts, and theories of any particular people, which are stored in their language, practices, rituals, proverbs, revered traditions, myths, and folktales (Chalisa, 2012, p. 116).

The value of this knowledge is in the way it is reflected and practised in all aspects of life, including in the education of their children. This is a very significant line of reasoning to note at this point as there is no dichotomy between what is known, and the way people live their lives in an *Ubuntu*

world view. This point is further developed in the chapter on *Ubuntu*. Chilisa further observes that in indigenous relational epistemologies ‘...knowledge arises out of the people’s relationship and interaction with their particular environments’ (2012, p. 117). It is this understanding that underscores the need and importance of using an *Ubuntu* relational epistemology and methodology in this research. My relational constructionist epistemological position is consistent with an *Ubuntu* methodology.

2.6: Research Approach.

This research will be qualitative, interpretive and theoretical in nature. It will be interpretive in the sense that existing policy documents will be critically analysed, interpreted and evaluated in the light of an *Ubuntu* concept of social justice in education, which is explained in chapters three and four. It will be theoretical, in the sense that it will primarily focus on working with secondary data rather than collecting primary data. I use the idea of ‘secondary data’ loosely here as the idea of a cyclic, recursive process means that at each stage new data is generated which impacts the next layers of interactions in this open process.

In this research I adopt a ‘meta’ or ‘second order’ perspective in that I focus on how people within Southern Africa have conceptualised *Ubuntu*. This involves a review of literature on this concept. The aims of the literature review are twofold. Firstly, to locate and broaden our understanding of how this concept is used within Southern Africa in general, but more specifically in Zimbabwe. Secondly, to develop a coherent theory of social justice underpinned and informed by views and practical expressions of *Ubuntu* as a philosophical lens. Once the ‘contour lines’ have been drawn, this theory is then used to critically analyse and interpret the policy documents and other evaluative reports on Zimbabwe’s education system post 1980. The goal being to identify specific policy themes which inform whether postcolonial education in Zimbabwe has any focus on *Ubuntu* social justice, and if so, whether the policy shift has resulted in a more socially just education system.

2.7: Data Collection.

In this research I depart from the traditional Euro-Western conceptualisation of methods in research in the sense that I adopt a more cyclical, recursive and open as opposed to a linear closed approach in data collection (Wilson, 2008; Porsanger, 2004; Chilisa, 2012). It is cyclical and recursive because data collection is layered, beginning with myself as a researcher researching in a context of which I am part. As someone born and educated in Zimbabwe (therefore part of *abantu*) in the period I am researching, I am part of the researched and as such enter the research process with data that contributes to this research process. The second layer of data is in the literature review process. As someone researching from an Afrocentric paradigm of *Ubuntu* it is imperative that the research is located in a clearly defined location and context (Asante, 1998; Smith, 2012; Chilisa, 2012). So, chapter five, on Zimbabwe's colonial education system locates and contextualises the research and provides another layer of relevant data to the overall development of the research. Thirdly, the chapter (chapter three) on the concept of *Ubuntu* provides another layer of data that underpins and frames the whole thesis as it offers frameworks for critiquing, analysing and interpreting the policy documents.

The fourth layer of data collection is the analysis of the policy documents on the EFA policy (chapter six). At each layer of data collection and analysis, the process is cyclical in that there is forwards and backwards cross referencing of data. Central to this process is the relational dimension which is central to *Ubuntu* ontology, epistemology and axiology (Chilisa, 2012). Data collection will therefore be a dynamic process cutting across all aspects of this research process rather than limited to one segment of the research process. This is because of the relational epistemological frames where the researcher and the subject of the research are in this constant dynamic relationship allowing for a dynamic continuous process of data collection at each point of interaction, rather than a fixed and closed data collection process. So, as I engage with the literature, my perspective of the subject of

my research changes, resulting in changes in my interpretation of the data gathered in subsequent layers. This continuous dialogical engagement with the subject of my research means that there is no separation between data gathering and analysis phases of the process. Consistent with my Relational Critical Realist ontological and epistemological position, it follows that the findings and conclusions of this thesis cannot be perceived as the whole truth but rather as indicative of how far we have travelled in our meaning making process on this subject.

2.8: Data Analysis.

Data analysis and interpretation is informed by a relational epistemological theory. This is an *Ubuntu* conceptualisation of what counts as valid knowledge claims. As highlighted above, because of the cyclical and recursive nature of a relational epistemological theory it follows that data analysis does not happen at the end as a separate process. Data analysis is cumulative as is data collection. As successive layers of data are uncovered in this interactive process between the researcher and the researched, analysis is also taking place informing and influencing the next stage of the research. As the analysis focuses on the EFA policy, it also follows that this policy must be deconstructed using the theory of social justice informed by the ontological and epistemic frames of *Ubuntu*. For instance, when looking at the EFA policy, can those who see themselves as *abantu* see themselves in it? Does the policy reflect their sense of being, culture, values, practices etc? Does the policy represent their aspirations and the way they would want to see their children educated or is it just another imposed initiative divorced from them as *abantu*? Interacting with the policy this way will happen at different levels and stages throughout this research.

2.9: Ethical Considerations.

I must acknowledge at this point that I have the privilege and therefore insight of having been born and educated in Zimbabwe and lived through the transition from colonial rule to independence.

Consequently, some of the questions I raise in this research are motivated by my own personal experiences and interests. As such, it is not possible to pretend to be objective and write as though I were an outsider to the historical realities of my research. Rather, my aim is to offer a critique and analysis of the EFA policy from an indigenous methodological perspective in the hope that we might develop a picture closer to reality than otherwise. A position consistent with my relational critical realist ontology. While this might be viewed as a strength, it is also a limitation. This is because it is not possible to detach myself from some of my personal experiences of both the historical realities of colonialism, the expectations associated with independence and the realities of the post-colonial period of which the EFA policy is part. My challenge in this analysis, critique and interpretation of the policy is in avoiding the fallacy of universalism. That is, expressing my personal views and claiming that they are representative of *Ubuntu*. Given that I have adopted an indigenous research methodology, how 'true' have I remained to the ethical tenets of indigenous methodologies? To what extent have I avoided the pitfalls of imperialist methodologies that Asante (1998) and Smith (2012) amongst others implores us to guard against? This research has deliberately sought to show awareness of and adherence to what Wilson (2008) calls relational axiology. This can be summed up as; '*relational accountability, respectful representation, reciprocal appropriation and rights and responsibilities*' (Chilisa, 2012, p. 174). The 4 Rs, as they are commonly known in indigenous research, ensure that the researcher takes responsibility to safeguard the integrity of the research in a relational way. The chapter on the history of the colonial education system in Zimbabwe is designed to ensure that the reader has a context within which to locate the 'supposed' concerns of the EFA policy and be able to assess for themselves whether there is accountability and respectful representation in my research. The chapter on *Ubuntu* (chapter three) also provides further opportunity for assessing 'respectful representation.

One of the aims of this research is to critique the EFA policy in order to shed more light on whether this policy is of any value to the people of Zimbabwe. This transformative agenda puts the focus on

the researched rather than the researcher. Given that this research does not involve human participants in the collection of data, there are no other ethical issues to consider other than those associated with the relational axiology highlighted above. Nevertheless, it is important that the discussion chapter of this thesis reflects a more balanced approach to the analysis of the policy. The validity and credibility of the analysis and interpretation of the policy will be judged on the credibility of the application of *Ubuntu* theory of social justice and the extent to which the research has remained true to an indigenous research paradigm. One of the limitations of my methodology is that I have not allowed the Zimbabwean people to speak for themselves on this policy. The limitation of the scope of this research has meant that consulting the documents would yield enough data to meet the requirements of a Doctoral thesis. I however acknowledge that gathering more data on the policy using focus groups and talk stories (Chilisa, 2012) would have enriched the analysis further.

Secondly, there is limited literature on *Ubuntu* written by Zimbabwean scholars as most of my sources are by South African scholars. The question therefore is, to what extent are the views of South African scholars on the concept of *Ubuntu* a respectful representation of how Zimbabweans would conceptualise *Ubuntu*? While this concept is used across Southern Africa it should be acknowledged that even Southern Africa is not culturally homogeneous. I am not suggesting that a Zimbabwean scholar would better represent this concept than a South African would; rather I am mindful of the specific nuances attached to variances in culture, language and location. In my desire to remain 'true' to the spirit of indigenous research methodology which is place specific I want to acknowledge this limitation.

2.10: Conclusion.

In this methodology chapter I have attempted to first demonstrate that the focus of this thesis is both viable and worth pursuing as it is an area of research that has not been done before. A theoretical analysis of the EFA policy and other related documents through an *Ubuntu* conceptual

framework is an original approach in engaging with policy documents. This critical analytic and interpretive process through *Ubuntu* lens offers an opportunity to construct a new understanding of social justice issues in Zimbabwe's EFA policy. It offers fresh insight in the way predominantly Western concepts can and should be understood when applied to different geo-political, socio-economic and cultural contexts. Sensitivity to these differentials allow for a more authentic and nuanced suggestions for what an Afrocentric research methodology might be without merely mimicking Western thought forms. Given my relational constructionist epistemological position, it follows that for the aims of this research to be achieved there is no need to collect any new primary data as the literature review on the history of colonial education in Zimbabwe, the concept of *Ubuntu* and the policy documents will yield enough secondary data to facilitate the analysis, critique and interpretation of the EFA policy.

Chapter 3

***Ubuntu* Philosophy.**

3.1: Introduction.

In chapter two, I have argued for the need to adopt an Afrocentric methodology when researching on any topic that can be located within the African context. I argued that adopting such an indigenous methodology would safeguard against imperialist research methodologies that would perpetuate the plight of the formerly colonised people groups and miss the opportunity for decolonisation and empowerment. From the perspective of the formerly colonised, a position from which I enter my field of research, *Ubuntu* philosophy is a legitimate vantage point, and potentially, provides a basis for a quest for social justice in Zimbabwe's education system. I therefore concur with Asante (1998), Prah (1999), Smith (2012) and Chilisa (2012) when they challenge indigenous researchers to be vigilant against adopting Euro-Western indigenous research methodologies and treating them as though they were universal. It is within this spirit that a discussion on *Ubuntu* philosophy becomes key to this research. Its centrality to this research is in its use, both as the lens with which I analyse and review the EFA policy and the methodology for carrying out the research.

In this chapter, I discuss *Ubuntu* in its various conceptualisations (African humanism, a philosophy, an ethic or even a worldview), particularly in Southern Africa, of which Zimbabwe is a part. I begin by offering a brief historical analysis of how this concept has developed over three critical periods in history; which are pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times. I must however warn the reader here as this linear conceptualisation of time and reading of history is itself symptomatic of the logic of coloniality. I will pick this up again in my discussion chapter. Here I argue that *Ubuntu* as a relational concept was violated on its encounter with the Euro-Western philosophies. Violated by both the 'Europeanisation and subalternisation' of Africa as a continent (Soyinka, 2012; Ndlovu-

Gatsheni, 2018). The silencing of *abantu* leading to both cognitive and epistemic violence has been the nature of *Ubuntu's* relationship with the conceptual West since the arrival of imperialist in Southern Africa. The chapter discusses the different ways in which the concept of *Ubuntu* is defined, focusing on the philosophical core tenets of what *Ubuntu* means. This leads on to a discussion on the contested nature of *Ubuntu* philosophy, how such contestations have arisen and undermined an authentic discourse on *Ubuntu*. I also offer possible solutions to the scholarly contestations we find, particularly in the post-colonial literature. I conclude with a clear identification of the principles that would inform an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice that is the subject of the next chapter.

3.2: What is Ubuntu?

Before I engage in an attempt to delineate the 'boundaries' of this concept I want to start by borrowing from Praeg (2008), who argues that all thinking is limited, boxed in and therefore representative of only what has already been thought but expanding into the 'unthought'. Significant to note however, is that there is no firm, clear boundary between the two. This is contestable as will be seen in my argument below. However, notwithstanding my contestations Praeg posits that: *'[a]ll thinking is limited: we cannot reflect on the nature of thinking in terms other than the very thinking we reflect upon. Thinking is walled in by the limits of thinking like madness remains walled in by sanity'* (Praeg, 2008, p. 367). Here Praeg develops the idea that beyond what we already think about is the domain of the 'unthought', which is vast beyond our imagination. Why? Because we have never been there in our thought processes. I want to argue that even in talking about the concept of *Ubuntu* is contingent on our historical encounter with, as well as our own reflexivity within this or other related concepts that we will use in trying to make sense of this concept. However, the fact that we might not yet have encountered this concept does not necessarily mean that it is not real or that it is of less value to what is familiar to us. In addition, I want to contend that what is 'unthought' to me is not necessarily 'unthought' to others. My point being that *Ubuntu* is part of the domain of what is familiar to those who are *abantu* or those who

have encountered the concept and yet might be ‘unthought’ to those grounded in other worldviews such as Western philosophical thought, who are yet to encounter this concept.

Consequently, I open this discussion by suggesting three possible responses to the question, what is *Ubuntu*? Firstly, there are those who have taken *Ubuntu* to be a historical, authentic, and legitimate conceptualisation of being. A Southern African view of *Ubuntu* as a philosophy of being (Mbiti, 1969; Samkange & Samkange, 1980; Gyekye, 1992, 1995, 1997, 2004, 2014; Ramose, 2007; Murove, 2014; Mangena, 2012b, 2016). Secondly, there are those who see it as a mere moral quality (Gade, 2011, 2014) or a basic norm (Metz, 2007, 2013). Thirdly, there are those who have rejected the historicity and authenticity of *Ubuntu* as a philosophy of being. To the contrary they have argued that *Ubuntu* is a ‘narrative of return’; a response to colonialism and an attempt to legitimise and authenticate something exclusively African (van Binsburgen, 2001; Matolino, 2009; Matolino & Kwindigwi, 2013). The fourth position to which I subscribe argues that the first and third positions are not mutually exclusive when read and understood correctly as will be shown below. The second position is a Western interpretation of *Ubuntu* as it fails to appreciate ‘--- that it is relational, dialogical, consensual, spiritual, horizontal and vertical (Mangena, 2016, p. 68). While *Ubuntu* is an authentic Southern African conceptualisation of being, it is not frozen in history, nor is it complete and static. It is not bound in space and time and hence cannot be returned to. As such, it does not need to be reduced to a narrative of return as defined by the proponents of this theory, represented by van Binsburgen (2001).

To borrow from Praeg (2008) once again; the tension between thought and ‘unthought’ does not necessarily lead one way or the other in its resolution. In fact, it is that tension that keeps a balance between the two polarities. If to be, is to become, then to become means that tension needs to be sustained rather than destroyed or resolved (Praeg, 2008). To resolve the tension is to completely unbalance what thought derives from ‘unthought’ or what ‘unthought’ derives from thought.

Nevertheless, thought can only continue to become if ‘unthought’ remains in harness while without

thought, we can never make sense of ‘unthought’ as it is in our thinking that we make sense of ‘unthought’. The mere fact that I hold a different worldview does not mean that I must reject the other in fear of being annihilated. Rather, otherness is always an opportunity to extend the boundaries of my thought world into the ‘unthought’. At the centre of this example I have borrowed from Praeg, is the notion that in moving from thought into unthought, I never lose thought, rather, I expand it. It is only in doing so that my worldview expands and offer options for a new co-constructed reality. To use Praeg’s analogy, we can only understand insanity when referenced to sanity and likewise without sanity walled in insanity, sanity is meaningless (Praeg, 2008). Having cast this theoretical frame, what then is *Ubuntu*?

3.2.1: The Historical Development of *Ubuntu* as a Concept.

There is consensus amongst scholars that the concept of *Ubuntu*/ personhood or humanness, can be found in all African languages (Mbiti, 1969; Ramose, 2002, 2007; Gade, 2012; Metz, 2013, Murove, 2014, among others). This is because both *abantu* (human beings) and *Ubuntu* (personhood) and as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017, 2018) rightly observes, Africans as a people have always been there as part of the human history. As he further contends, ‘*Africans always had their own valid, legitimate and useful knowledge systems and education systems*’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, p. 2). This argument is well developed by Soyinka (2012, p. 27) who stresses the point that unlike other continents such as ‘--- the Americas or Australasia, for instance, no one actually claims to have ‘discovered’ Africa’. The implications of Soyinka’s (2012) argument is that Africa, and I want to stress Southern Africa has a history which pre-dates colonialism. It is this primeval, colonially unadulterated history from which we can begin our quest to understanding the concept of *Ubuntu*.

However, Bhengu (1996), Lodge (1999) van Binsbergen (2001) amongst others, argue that this concept first appears in written form after the 1950s. van Binsbergen further notes that he first encounters this concept as an African philosophy in the works of the Samkanges (1980), *Hunhuims*

or *Ubuntuism: A Zimbabwe Indigenous Political Philosophy* (van Binsbergen (2001). Indeed, a general literature search reveals that most of the written contributions on this concept particularly as a philosophy appear in the second half of the 1900s, a position also taken by Gade (2011). I want to underscore however, that the prevalence of *Ubuntu* in written form after 1950 and its development as an African philosophy of being is consistent with other developments within the African continent.

Firstly, most if not all Southern African countries had a different education system from Euro-Western systems before the colonial period, which started in the second half of the 1800s and continued for almost a century for most countries. Prior to the colonisation of Africa, particularly Southern Africa, which was colonised by European countries, written forms as we know it today did not exist and therefore it is clear why not much would be found in that format. Secondly, during the colonial period not many Africans were being educated to the level where they could publish any work and as such only Western scholars could write about this concept if at all. Indeed, at closer analysis of available references to this concept prior to 1950 would reveal reference to *Ubuntu* by some authors (Gade, 2011). A literature search by Gade (2011) on the concept of *Ubuntu* shows references from pre-colonial to post-colonial times. See table below.

Table 3.1: Written Sources on Ubuntu prior to 1980:

Ubuntu Prior To 1980	Sources
Ubuntu as ' Human Nature '	Appleyard 1850: 106; Perrin 1855: 120; Colenso 1855: 7; Colenso 1861: 354; Roberts 1880: 107; Grout 1893: 290; Roberts 1895: 133; McLaren 1955: 25; Bryant 1963: 232; Callaway 1969: 22
Ubuntu as ' Humanity '	Callaway 1926: 395; Wilson 1936: 555; Doke 1945: 60; Walker 1948: 220; Van Sembeek 1955: 42; McLaren 1955: 25; Malcolm 1960: 163; Doke et al. 1967: 54; Rodegem 1967: 129;

	Callaway 1969: 22; Thompson 1969: 129; Epstein 1967: 379; Pauw 1973: 89; Thompson & Butler 1975: 158 & 160; Clarke & Ngobese 1975: 34; Livingston 1979: 128
Ubuntu as 'Humanness'	Egenbrecht 1962: 22; De Vries 1966: 121; Thompson & Butler 1975: 158; Samkange 1975: 96; Lissner 1976: 92; Ziervogel et al. 1976: 58; Krige et al. 1978: 152; Du Plessis 1978: 48; Biko 1979: 214

Source: Adapted from Gade (2011, p. 307):

As Gade (2011) acknowledges, while most of the scholars who have been writing on *Ubuntu* after 1980 have not cited any sources before 1950, there is clear evidence that this concept has been in use, and in written form as early as 1846 (Gade, 2011). It is poignant to note that most of these early sources are from scholars of Euro- Western origin. While it is not easy to develop clarity on how indigenous people themselves were using this concept, the evidence from Gade above, helps to demonstrate that the concept is not a postcolonial construct as scholars like van Binsbergen (2001) have argued. Again, the lack of African scholars amongst these early written sources of the concept of *Ubuntu* is consistent with other historical developments at the time. What this evidence does not prove however, is whether earlier usages of this concept by indigenous people could be described as a philosophy or worldview. I will develop this aspect of the discussion under the section on *Ubuntu* as African philosophy of being (section 3.2.3.1). Gade (2011) further identifies other usages of the concept, which show that this concept might have carried varied meanings in different languages and cultures across Africa. The dominant understanding however is that, the concept is descriptive of human qualities, more specifically positive human qualities. Samkange & Samkange (1980) who, however, go on to develop what they term an African philosophy of being also attest this view. Again, this would be consistent with the fact that the scholars where not *abantu* themselves and as

such could only describe what they observed as opposed to expressions of their lived experiences.

These usages of the concept and their sources are tabled below.

Table 3.2: Other less referenced usages of the concept of Ubuntu prior to 1980:

Ubuntu Prior To 1980	Sources
'Manhood'	Colenso 1861: 354; Wilson 1936: 555; Callaway 1969: 22
'Goodness of Nature'	Colenso 1861: 354
'Moral disposition'	Colenso 1861: 354
'Virtue'	McLaren 1918: 332
'The sense of common humanity'	Barnes 1935: 46
'True humanity'	Callaway et al. 1945: 11
'True good fellowship and sympathy in joy and in sorrow'	Callaway et al. 1945: 11
'Reverence for human nature'	Callaway et al. 1945: 29
'Essential humanity'	Shepherd & Paver 1947: 41
'The kindly simple feeling for persons as persons'	Brookes 1953: 20
'Manliness'	Van Sembeek 1955: 42; Callaway 1969: 22
'Liberality'	Kagame 1956: 53
'A person's own human nature'	Read 1959: 149; Read 1968: 80
'Generosity'	Kimenyi 1979: 75
'Human feeling'	Jabavu 1960: 4
'Humaneness'	Prideaux 1925: 269; Vilakazi 1962: 60; Nyembezi 1963: 47; Nyembezi 1970: 16.

'Good disposition'	Nyembezi 1963: 47
'Good disposition'	Nyembezi 1963: 47
'Good moral nature'	Nyembezi 1963: 47
'Personhood'	Reader 1966: 175
'Politeness'	Rodegem 1967: 129
'Kindness'	Rodegem 1967: 129; Callaway 1969: 2
'Real humanity'	Sabra Study Group of Fort Hare 1971: 121
'Humanity (benevolence)'	South African Department of Bantu Education 1972a: 129.
'Personality'	South African Department of Bantu Education 1972b: 153
'Human kindness'	Jordan 1973: 228
'The characteristic of being truly human'	Pauw 1975: 117
'Greatness of soul'	Thompson & Butler 1975: 213
'A feeling of human wellbeing'	Clarke & Ngobese 1975: 61
'Capacity of social self-sacrifice on behalf of others'	Hetherington 1978: 68

Source: Adapted from Gade (2011, pp. 307 – 308).

When analysed holistically these data reveal two things. Firstly, that not only is it difficult to define *Ubuntu*, but also, that it might not be necessary. Not necessary because of how *Ubuntu* as we have it has come to be, where it came from and how it has evolved overtime and context as it encountered its historical realities. This is significant, more so, given its relational ontology and epistemology. Part of developing an understanding of what *Ubuntu* is, involves developing an understanding of the evolution of *Ubuntu* from pre-colonial, through colonial into post-colonial historical periods. It is this understanding that would help make sense of some of the debates by scholars who seem to be

arguing past each other rather than addressing each other's arguments. Defining *Ubuntu* in its pre-colonial context as praxis, is different from defining it in its post-colonial context as a philosophy designed to inform even the socio-economic and political developments in a decolonising postcolonial context. Whichever way one chooses to define this concept, we should take cognisance of what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018, p. 2) calls; '*genocides, epistemicides, linguicide, and cultural imperialism*' experienced by *abantu*. Such levels of violence amongst *abantu* would have inevitably distorted their sense of being, leading to both cognitive and epistemic injustice.

A good example of scholars arguing past each other can be seen in the Menkiti (1984, 2004) and Gyekye (1992, 1995) debate on Radical Communitarianism (RC) versus Moderate Communitarianism (MC). While Gyekye (1992, 1995) criticises Menkiti's (1984) concept of personhood as reflecting RC because it excludes individual rights; his call for a more moderate conceptualisation of personhood is deemed to be equally inadequate or just as radical as Menkiti's (Matolino, 2009; Oyowe, 2014). On the other hand, there are some like Matz (2011, 2012) who argue that the entire Menkiti-Gyekye debate as not helpful at all as it limits and narrows the conceptualisation and development of a more inclusive community driven understanding of rights. There is a sense in which some of the debates on *Ubuntu* fail to recognise the relationality and historicity of this concept and continue to define it in a reductive way, influenced by some Western scholars who fail to embrace a relational epistemology that underpins *Ubuntu* philosophy.

Secondly, the data reveals that an attempt to pin down *Ubuntu* to an essentialist definition and meaning would be reductive and undermine the ontology and epistemology of *Ubuntu* which are relational and contextual. The early written sources of this concept show that *Ubuntu* was understood as a human quality, and a positive quality for that matter (Gade, 2011). This is evident from the examples contained in Table 3. 2 above. What is not evident is whether the use of *Ubuntu* as a reference to human qualities reflects a consistent usage of the concept and whether this is how *abantu* themselves used the concept. Once again, this is consistent with the fact that the scholars

involved were not *'abantu'* and therefore could only write about what they observed a priori. In the next section, I develop the idea that *Ubuntu* is descriptive of human qualities.

3.2.2: *Ubuntu* as a human moral quality.

Samkange & Samkange (1980) offer a definition that resonates with most of the literature by African scholars. They defined *Ubuntu* as; *'The attention one human being gives to another: the kindness, courtesy, consideration and friendliness in the relationship between people; a code of behaviour, an attitude to other people and to life, is embodied in hunhu or ubuntu'* (Samkange & Samkange, 1980, p. 39). Developing this relational understanding of what *Ubuntu* is, Samkange and Samkange further highlight the context within which this conceptualisation of *Ubuntu* might have evolved further during colonial times in Zimbabwe. Again, as a relational concept, it follows that the relational context of the time would have an impact in the way Africans perceived and interpreted their interactions with their colonial masters. This is what Samkange and Samkange had to say;

We know also, it [Ubuntu] means more than just a person, human being or humanness because when one sees two people, one white and the other black, coming along, we say, 'Hona munhu uyo ari kufamba nomurungu' or in isiNdebele, 'Nanguyana umuntu ohamba lo mlungu' (There is a muntu/munhu walking with a white man). Now, is there a sense in which we can say a white man lacks something which we always identify in an African? Yes, black Americans, for instance, identify something they call 'soul' as being almost exclusively among black folk. ...Why? Perhaps because of the unique experience the black American has had passing through a particular brand of slavery: North American slavery (Samkange and Samkange, 1980, pp. 38–39).

As will be discussed in greater depth in this and following chapter, this is a relational ethic focusing on how people relate to each other. While I unequivocally reject the idea of the 'soul' alluded to in the above quotation, Samkange and Samkange make a poignant point here. It is the fact that *Ubuntu* is not construed as a biological genetic quality, but rather a relational attitude and attributes that are cultivated in people as they grow and develop in a relational sense. Reflecting on the above quote from Samkange & Samkange, Murove (2014) observes that thus construed; *Ubuntu* would have been the antithesis of the colonial value system. This is because the colonial ethic informed by

individualism and an emphasis on the 'Self' would have cut across that of *Ubuntu* with a focus on 'Other' and a relational rationality thereof. This is a significant point for my *Ubuntu* theory of social justice and its relevance to a socially just education system. This will be further developed in chapters four and seven.

There is a sense in which colonialist, because of their superiority complex (informed by the logic of coloniality); when they first encountered the Africans, they 'subalternised' everything African. In doing so, they missed the opportunity to learn who the Africans were. Their focus was more on imposing their values and ways of doing things on Africans instead of developing relationships with them. Consequently, while *Ubuntu* philosophy has always been there, it remained hidden to them, except in anecdotal terms as evident in table 3.2 above. It is this silencing of *abantu* that resulted in epistemological violence and oppression that has continued to this day.

Equally important is to observe that those unfamiliar with *Ubuntu* philosophy may not read much into the maxim "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" as to them it may simply be a phrase descriptive of the human interdependence particularly at an early stage in the journey of life. However, for the *Bantu* people this phrase has metaphysical and ontological connotations. It speaks to the very essence of man qua man. As Metz and Gaie posit: '*Personhood, identity and humanness in sub-Saharan language and thought are value-laden concepts. That is, one can be more or less of a person, self or human being, where the more one is, the better*' (2010, p. 275). The idea being that throughout one's life the goal is always to become, to become a 'full' person, a real self or a genuine human being. Also, in becoming one develops those attributes and relational attitudes towards belonging. Being as belonging is an important value in *Ubuntu* philosophy.

The notion that personhood as a relational moral quality is something that an individual attains progressively through life is contrary to traditional essentialist western thought and philosophy. For

instance, the idea that ‘purpose precedes design’ would imply that there is something essentially human that all human beings are born with. However, for the African concept of *Ubuntu*, this is what is distinctive and gives justification to developing an ‘authentic’ Southern African concept of social justice. It is also significant to note, that a child in Ndebele is referred to as *umntwana*. *These are two words, umuntu* (person) and *ntwana* (small), literally meaning small person. This does not only mean small in stature but also small in all aspects of becoming fully human. Personhood therefore is both relational and developmental and is something that one becomes throughout life. This values-oriented conceptualisation of personhood is reflected in responsibilities and expectations assigned to people at different stages in their development. As noted above, in defining the concept of *Ubuntu* Samkange & Samkange (1980) identified moral qualities or attributes that could be used to define *Ubuntu* (humanness), arguing that those lacking in these qualities could be deemed to be without *Ubuntu*. Attributes like care, kindness, courtesy, consideration, respect, love etc., could be seen as embodied in *Ubuntu*.

My assessment is that this separation reflects a more Eurocentric interpretation of the concept given Gade’s (2011) assertion that the first published work was in the 1950s and by scholars of European descent. Given that we often talk of people as having *Ubuntu* might explain why European writers would focus on this human quality as the essence of *Ubuntu*. Given the dehumanising experiences of the African people in the hands of their colonial masters in the era of slavery and colonialism, white people were not seen as *abantu* (humans) (Samkange & Samkange 1980). In this period *Ubuntu* was violated and as such those responsible were lacking in the values and attributes that would identify them as having *Ubuntu*. For example, Desmond Tutu (1999, p. 34) wrote that if a person possesses *Ubuntu* then they must be ‘*generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate*’. While it is arguable that someone who does not exhibit these qualities may be deemed to be less *umuntu*, it does not follow that having these qualities is definitive of what *Ubuntu* is. One might argue that all people with *Ubuntu* will exhibit most of these attributes, but not all

people who exhibit these qualities necessarily have *Ubuntu*. In a sense, *Ubuntu* is seen as greater than the sum of its parts. Therefore, *Ubuntu* is irreducible to having set human moral qualities and conceptualised more as a worldview. While human moral qualities are necessary conditions for one to be *umuntu* they are not sufficient conditions for *Ubuntu*. How then is this conceptualised more broadly as a worldview?

3.2.3.1: *Ubuntu* as African Philosophy of being.

As more and more writers of African descent (Asante, 1998; Ramose, 2002; Ngcoya, 2009 Chilisa, 2012) have engaged with the concept of *Ubuntu*, focus has shifted from a conceptualisation of it as human moral qualities to a broad worldview. As Gade (2014) notes, it is not until the 1950s that this development of *Ubuntu* as part of African philosophy and ethics took root and was taken seriously by other philosophers beyond the African continent. While Gade (ibid) further argues that it was not until 1993 to 1995 before the African proverb '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*' was used to directly define what *Ubuntu* is; I am of the opinion that this link might be this late, but this does not mean that this is when the two concepts were first connected. The mere fact that an idea is not in written form does not mean it does not exist as a philosophy. If Gade (2014) is to be taken seriously on this analysis, the question would be, what was the meaning of this proverb in the first place? This proverb has been part of the *Bantu* languages since time immemorial and unless there is another meaning to it, other than that associated with *Ubuntu* philosophy, then Gade's analysis does not hold. My reading of Gade (2014) is that he was making a historical analysis without necessarily implying that *Ubuntu* as a worldview has only developed in the last half of the 20th century. As a worldview, *Ubuntu* is well captured in Ngcoya's articulation of it when he wrote:

Ubuntu stresses the importance of community, solidarity, caring, and sharing. This worldview [ubuntu] advocates a profound sense of interdependence and emphasizes that our true human potential can only be realized in partnership with others (2009, p. 1).

Conceptualised this way the nearest Eurocentric concept to *Ubuntu* would be humanism. But trying to equate *Ubuntu* with humanism fails to capture the ‘full’ meaning of the concept as will be evident in the subsequent discussions. Discussing the idea of *Ubuntu* as fundamentally human interconnectedness Tutu (1999) highlights the entanglement of human beings to the point that even those who exhibits inhumane qualities through oppressive and violent behaviour towards others are just as enslaved by their actions as their victims. This is how he summed up this view:

Ubuntu means that in a real sense even the supporters of apartheid were victims of the vicious system which they implemented and which they supported so enthusiastically. Our humanity was intertwined. The humanity of the perpetrator of apartheid’s atrocities was caught up and bound up in that of his victim whether he liked it or not. In the process of dehumanizing another, in inflicting untold harm and suffering, the perpetrator was inexorably being dehumanized as well (Tutu, 1999, p. 35).

The views expressed by Tutu in the quotation above reveal what is at the core of *Ubuntu* philosophy. Whether we are talking about social vices or success, power relations or personal relations between people; the relationality of the human condition is such that whatever happens to one happens to all. The impact of human conditions geographically, historically, or in the future are all inextricably intertwined. A human being cannot and will not suffer alone just as much as they cannot succeed alone (see appendix F). This is what being human calls for; a shared reality and mode of being, whether we like, care about it or even aware of it or not. This line of thinking resonates with my view of *Ubuntu* as being, becoming and belonging discussed above. This is very significant to *Ubuntu* theory of social justice discussed in the next chapter. To assume that one can be socially just while relating or ignoring the plight of others is to fail to understand what *Ubuntu* social justice is.

Having discussed the idea of *Ubuntu* as a human moral quality in the previous section and *Ubuntu* as African philosophy of being in this section, it becomes clear that the former is an expression of the latter. As such people who do not exhibit these moral qualities would, strictly speaking not be classified as human (Samkange & Samkange, 1980; Murove, 2009; Gade, 2014). Similarly, under the worldview of *Ubuntu*, persons are interconnected and interdependent, meaning that unless you are

a person, you would not be expected to exhibit these values. In this light, the human moral qualities are a practical expression of *Ubuntu* philosophy or what I can call *Ubuntu* praxis.

3.2.3.2: *Ubuntu* as Communalism.

Communalism is a value by which the interests of the individual are construed as subordinate to those of the group (Kamwangamalu, 1999; Molefe, 2017a). The individual's self-perception, agency and efficacy are viewed through what is in the best interest of the group. As Kamwangamalu puts it '*Communalism insists that the good of all determines the good of each, or, put differently, the welfare of each is dependent on the welfare of all*' (1999, p. 27). An important interpretation of this communalistic value is that in a traditional Southern African context, no one lives for himself or herself, rather, everyone's being is intertwined with that of his or her community. This is a very significant observation that I will develop further when discussing the concept of social justice informed by *Ubuntu* philosophy. This is because the relationship between the individual and the community is central to *Ubuntu* philosophy. Whether or not *Ubuntu* offers grounding for social justice depends on how the individual and the community relate.

There is a general agreement amongst African scholars that in *Ubuntu* philosophy the general wellbeing of the group is primary to the welfare of the individual (Samkange & Samkanke, 1980; Menkiti, 1984, 2004; Gyekye, 1992, 2004; Chilisa, 2012). The maxim, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through other people) lends weight to this general understanding. However, when this is read together with the saying, 'I am because we are, and we are because I am' there is a sense in which it can be argued that *Ubuntu* philosophy reflects a duality between the community and the individual. My reading of *Ubuntu* philosophy, particularly as an ethic, reflects a disjuncture between those who are dualist and those who are monistic in practice. I want to argue that this way of reflecting on *Ubuntu* is helpful in how we explain the relationship between the common good and the dignity of the individual (Molefe, 2017). Molefe observes that:

MC, as a moral-political theory, is a dualistic principle, which is grounded on two fundamental moral norms, namely: 1) the common good; and 2) dignity. The first norm, common good, grounds our duties to secure the wellbeing of all; the second, the idea of rights, captures the basic moral respect due to individuals as such (2017, p. 185).

Molefe's conceptualisation is significant to my theory of social justice as discussed in the next chapter. In this thesis I adopt a consideration of *Ubuntu* that Gyekye (1992, 2004) calls Moderate Communitarianism (MC). As Menkiti (1984), Kamwangamalu (1999), Chilisa (2012) amongst others argue for the primacy of the common good over the individual dignity, there is a sense in which they all agree that the idea of individual dignity secures a place for rights for the individual. This is crucial for the EFA policy in Zimbabwe as it is grounded on the idea of education as a human right. This will be developed in the next chapter.

Moderate communitarianism (MC) as represented by Gyekye (2004) is best understood when contrasted with what has been called radical communitarianism (RC) (Gyekye, 1992, 1995) when responding to Menkiti's (1984) characterisation of personhood. The debate between these two scholars is on the issue of the place of rights in an African conceptualisation of personhood. On the one hand, you have scholars as represented by Menkiti who argue that there are no rights in an African cosmology while those in the Gyekye camp advocating for a moderate conceptualisation, which provides for a place for right (Molefe, 2017). While I hold the view that pre-colonial understandings of *Ubuntu* would be properly represented by a more radical communitarianism my view is that post-colonial understanding of *Ubuntu* provides a place for rights given its encounter with Western conceptualisations of personhood, which emphasise individual right. I therefore argue that this shift from radical to moderate understandings is consistent with a relational ontology and epistemology inherent in *Ubuntu* philosophy.

It is also important to acknowledge that with Western influences on African communities particularly the urbanites, RC is rarely practised other than in remote rural communities (Kamwangamalu, 1999;

Chilisa, 2012). In Zimbabwe's urban areas, westernisation has transformed people's self-identity, the way people live and how they relate with each other. That said, we also need to remember that more than 80% of people in most Southern African countries still live in rural areas hence this point remains significant. Consequently, I do not argue for the return to pre-colonial Southern Africa but rather a return to being postcolonial Southern African in orientation. This is a recognition of the fact that the socio-cultural and economic conditions of post-colonial Southern Africa have changed because of decades of cultural imperialism. As such, post-colonial Southern African culture, particularly in urban areas, has been hybridised (Bhabha, 1994). This however does not point to an equality of contribution to the new cultural dynamic. I want to maintain the argument that the urban Southern African cultural space is still dominated by colonial cultural practices, which are portrayed by both the former coloniser and the colonised as more authentic. I therefore argue against the view that totally ignores that Africans were a people before the advent of colonialism; that Africans had a culture and that culture has shaped and framed who we are as a people. As advised by both Soyinka (2012) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) Africa has always had its rich knowledge systems before its encounter with the West, and it is this silencing of the African people that is responsible for the epistemic injustices we see in the education system today. To argue that *Ubuntu* is merely a call to return to pre-colonial Africa (Matolino & Kwindigwi, 2013) is to miss the point of the argument and to undermine African identities in favour of colonial identities. Accepting that post-colonial African culture and identity is a hybrid is one thing, but to reject the concept of *Ubuntu* while accepting the imperialist culture and identity is another. In this thesis, I argue for the former.

Another example of communalism is evident in the traditional African conceptualisation of children and how they are cared for in community. Children do not only belong to their biological parents, rather, they belong to the community and all members of that community have responsibility in raising these children. From infancy, children are taught that any male of similar age as their biological father should be addressed as father and the same goes for any woman of similar age as

their mother. Biological relatedness does not take precedence over communal boundedness (Mthembu, 1996). Consequently, words like mother, father, sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather, uncle or aunt do not only refer to biological relations but also to communal relations. These relations are at the centre of the values and the ethics thereof. Juxtaposed to a Western understanding of the same concepts, it is clear why most African children now living in the Western world, struggle to understand their identity and the identities of those around them. Southern African migrants' children, now living in the West struggle to reconcile the two worldviews in terms of personal and communal identities. The Western individualistic worldview presents a dilemma to the Southern African child, who might belong to both worlds depending on where they live or where they are educated. Once again, this raises interesting questions when we look at education and social justice. In chapters five and six, we will discuss these issues further. It is however important to observe that an emphasis on communalism does not seek to undermine or dismiss the importance of the individual, rather it is an emphasis in the efficacy and agency of belonging and working together (Molefe, 2017). The limitations of the individual are mitigated by belonging to the group hence the emphasis on group efficacy and agency.

3.2.3.3: *Ubuntu* as interdependence.

The second core value of this concept is that of *Ubuntu* as interdependence. This value is encapsulated in the saying 'I am because we are and we are because I am' (Samkange and Samkange, 1980; Mbigi & Maree, 1995; Bengu, 1996; Prozesky, 2009; Murove, 2009, 2014; Metz, 2013). It has already been noted, that in practice, these values are not separate and distinct; rather, they have only been separated in this discussion to develop better clarity on what *Ubuntu* is about. In practice, communalism and interdependence are intertwined and one implies the other, hence the difficulty of discussing them separately. The adage, 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu' (Murove, 2009, p. 42) (persons depend on other persons to be persons) speaks of the interdependence of personhood. It speaks of the identity of the individual as inseparable from that of his/her

community. This way of thinking would be shocking to those of Western orientation, those who are individualistic in their worldview. As Murove rightly observes; *'--- personhood is derivative from relationship with other persons, hence it is not an incorrigible property of the individual but something that is shared with others and finds nourishment and flourishing in relationships with others'* (2009, p. 42). Once again, relationality becomes the dominant motif that transcends how individual identities are developed. He seals this argument decisively when he posits that; *'--- the uniqueness of Ubuntu is mainly in the fact that community is presumed to be an organic whole because individuals do not come together to form the community, rather their identities are formed by the community'* (ibid, p. 42). In this light it follows that interdependence is not a choice if we are to remain human, it is what makes us human.

We have already been alerted to the interconnectedness, not only of humans but also of the environment within which humans find themselves (Chilisa, 2012). This includes that past, the present and the future. The living and the dead are also included in this relational boundedness. Understood in this light, *Ubuntu* is more than just humanness, it is the process of being, becoming and belonging (remaining human). It also follows that if *Ubuntu* is understood in this dependent and interdependent relational way, then, it must transcend every aspect of our human interactions and that includes education. In chapter four, we will construct an *Ubuntu* informed theory of social justice in education. Before then let us look at the idea that *Ubuntu* is nothing more than a utopian, ideological narrative of return.

3.3: Conceptualisations of *Ubuntu*.

Postcolonial African discourse on *Ubuntu* is fraught with tensions. This is because this concept has now become a contested concept with some philosophers like Matolino & Kwindigwi (2013) even contesting the legitimacy of *Ubuntu* as an authentic pre-colonial African conceptualisation of being and arguing for the end of *Ubuntu*. Some of these tensions have been necessitated by the desire to

find something authentic to being African, that is not a construct of postcolonial thought forms (Ramose, 2002; Prozesky 2009; Metz, 2013), while others are products of sheer scholarly mischief built on the logic of coloniality as represented by van Binsburgen (2001). Those who feel threatened by *Ubuntu* philosophy, as to accept its tenets would be to accept the implications it brings to how we view the world and act. In the next three subsections, I offer three possible responses to the question what *Ubuntu* is. It is within these discussions that I will address these tensions and their implications for an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice.

3.3.1: *Ubuntu* as Belonging/Community.

I begin by discussing a view of *Ubuntu* that is represented by the Prozesky camp. This is a view that *Ubuntu* as a concept must be taken seriously, as it represents a genuine Southern African cosmology and ontology (Samkange & Samkange, 1980; Menkiti, 1984, 2004; Gyekye, 1992, 1995; Murove, 2009, 2014; Metz, 2013). Martin Prozesky argued that:

There can thus be no genuinely global ethic until non-Africans start taking the rich and immensely long-standing ethical heritage of black Africa seriously. Not only is this an obvious requirement for simple, geographical completeness, it is even more essential for ethical depth (Prozesky, 2009, p. 3).

What then is this view and how is it justified? *Ubuntu* as a worldview is constructed from what can be called relational rationality (Chilisa, 2012; Murove, 2014). This is the view that a human being is a relational being and gains efficacy and agency in that relational context. Murove succinctly captures this worldview when he writes: *'Since Ubuntu is based on a worldview of relationality, its main insight is consequently based on the idea that as human beings we depend on other human beings to attain ultimate well-being'* (2014, p. 37). I want to take this claim a step further by positing that from an *Ubuntu* worldview 'full' humanity is a relational concept and communalism or communitarianism and interdependence are thus at the heart of this philosophy of being. It is out of this mode of conceptualising humanity that *Ubuntu* as a concept is defined as humanness. A position boldly attested to by Murove when he argues that;

[i]t has been often observed by many a scholar that it is the reality of our dependence and interdependence with each other that we attain the fullest of our humanness. Consequently, the definition of *Ubuntu* as humanness is dovetailed by this presumption- namely that humanness is our existential precondition of our bondedness with others (Morove, 2014, p. 37).

The concept of *Ubuntu* as humanness and humanness as interdependence is widely accepted by most scholars who have made an unbiased attempt at this discourse and this is not where the contestations lie. The contestations are on how we have arrived at this conclusion, particularly given the diversity of Southern African languages and meaning. How can we be sure that what is meant in one language by the concept of *Ubuntu* is what is meant in other languages? This is even more contentious given the colonial historicities of most Southern African countries. Given the dehumanising experiences of African peoples, how can we be sure that the expressions of *Ubuntu* as humanness are not mere protest philosophies to the harrowing colonial experiences and thus are not an authentic reflection of pre-colonial experiences? There is also the added complication of the evolution of language and meaning overtime and the lack of recorded pre-colonial discourses of the subject.

The questions raised above are indeed legitimate concerns and any critical engagement with this discourse demands that one responds to them. Firstly, very few African scholars, if any, would argue that the concept of *Ubuntu* is used uniformly across Africa and in different languages. In fact, there is an acknowledgement that in each language and culture there are variations (Asante, 1998). Where there is consensus is in the suggestion that this concept pre-dates the arrival of the Europeans and that where it is used, it is with reference to what it means to be human. In each language and culture, there are nuanced applications of the concept. In this thesis, I am focusing on how it is used within Southern Africa, Zimbabwe in particular. This is the reason why in using an Afrocentric methodology, context becomes vital (Asante, 1998).

Secondly, this is another area where Western ways of thinking have now been imposed on African indigenous knowledge systems and the methods of validating them assumed to be superior. Part of the African indigenous knowledge system has been the ability to store what is known in oral traditions. Knowledge is transferred from one generation to the next through stories, songs, cultural practices, artefacts, and value systems (Chilisa, 2012). What does it mean to say something is not recorded, when it is contained in the indigenous methods of storing knowledge? What epistemological theory of knowing is being used and who has the final say on the epistemological theory in use? The fact that usages of the concept of *Ubuntu* are not 'recorded' by western standards, should not undermine its value and authenticity, when analysed from an Afrocentric indigenous knowledge perspective. Within the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), there are ways of authenticating a narrative. What I would call the theory of multiple authenticity has always been used in traditional knowledge systems. This is where a narrative is deemed authentic if and only if, what is claimed can be authenticated through different aspects of how people live. For example, are there proverbs, cultural practices, songs, artefacts etc. that reflect what is being claimed? Since all these were ways of communicating and or teaching and preserving information, anything of value would be in more than one medium of communicating it. It is only when evaluated through the western lens that questions are raised.

Whatever the limitations of the authenticity of this discourse are, there is a sense in which maintaining the status quo is not an option and does not represent an authentic *Ubuntu* based Southern African worldview either. Also, the mere fact that pre-colonial African discourse was not 'recorded' (in western ways of keeping records) does not nullify its existence and authenticity, as to do so would be falling right back into the colonial mind set, where only that which is Western is authentic. Pre-colonial African discourse is captured in oral narratives, artefacts, values and beliefs systems (Chilisa 2012; Asante, 1998).

3.3.2: *Ubuntu* as a Post-colonial narrative of return:

It has been argued that colonialism and apartheid in Zimbabwe and South Africa respectively and indeed amongst other Southern African countries had such a damaging effect that the whole historic quest for independence was motivated by the desire to return to the pre-colonial era (Wiredu, 2008; Matolino & Kwindigwi, 2013). The dehumanising impact of these experiences by the colonised resulted in the political struggle for independence as part of the decolonisation journey. In this sense, *Ubuntu* is seen and interpreted as definitive to what it means to be African. This view is challenged by a few scholars such as van Binsbergen (2001), Christoph Marx (2002) and Neville Richardson (2008) amongst others who argue that *Ubuntu* is a narrative of return. Gade (2011) makes two observations about narratives of return. Firstly;

--- that narratives of return have often been told and discussed in the context of social transformations where political leaders, academics, and others have attempted to identify past values that they believed should inspire politics and life in general in the future society. The second observation is that African postcolonial narratives of return have typically contained the idea that in order to create a good future, society needs to return to something African which does not stem from the previous period of colonial oppression but which is rather rooted in pre-colonial times (Gade, 2011, p. 304).

Van Binsbergen (2001) for instance argues that *Ubuntu* is ideological, utopian and prophetic and therefore has no historical value other than as a rallying ideology for those with personal agendas for personal gain.

Reflecting on this conceptualisation of *Ubuntu* Matolino & Kwindigwi conclude that '*--- there is always a lingering danger of reducing African reality to a monolithic view*' (Matolino & Kwindigwi, 2013, p. 201). While all these scholars offer criticism of this monolithic version of what *Ubuntu* is, it should equally be noted that their point of departure is not the same. What is significant now, is understanding that this monolithic interpretation of *Ubuntu* obfuscates the discourse. This is because this is a very narrow and often dismissed understanding of the concept. Matolino &

Kwindingwi (2013) offer two grounds for a tempered embrace to *Ubuntu* as being what it means to be African.

Firstly, they argue that it is inconceivable to imagine there being no other expressions of being African other than *Ubuntu* in pre-colonial Africa. Granted that *Ubuntu* might have been the dominant expression of being, does not mean that those other expressions disqualify rival expressions from being African. To insist on this monolithic interpretation would be highly against *Ubuntu* ways of being and thinking. Being less popular does not mean the same thing as being not authentic. It is therefore conceivable that in pre-colonial Africa, there were other less popular modes of being and with the advent of colonialism; these rival modes became even less durable in the face of a more formidable common enemy. One could further extend the argument to say, a monolithic interpretation of what it means to be African undermines the very spirit of *Ubuntu*.

If 'I am because we are, and we are because I am'; it follows that every individual has a contribution to our common humanity. Our common humanity consists of a tension between the whole and its parts. Dissenting or rival expressions of what it means to be human become not only contingent but necessary in keeping a balance and eliminates dictatorships from the powerful. Before looking at their second line of argument, I want to point out two misconceptions. Firstly, there is a difference between being African and being human. *Ubuntu* is not definitive of what it means to be African; rather it defines what it means to be human. Before the arrival of the Europeans indigenous people groups in Africa did not call themselves Africans, yet they did call themselves as '*abantu*' (Humans, in their different languages) (Mbiti, 1969). It is those reflecting on these concepts through a Euro-Western lens, who look at these people groups as Africans. It is equally sound to argue that being African is not a homogeneous concept as Africans from the different parts of Africa have different cultures, languages, values and even belief systems.

The second and even more significant argument is that if indeed *Ubuntu* was the only mode of being African, then it makes *Ubuntu* a metaphysical concept of being. This would mean that there is

something inherently African in *Ubuntu* or is there? Matolino & Kwindigwi succinctly outlines this problem when they ask, *'[a]re Africans adherents of Ubuntu because there is something African in them that orients them towards Ubuntu? Or are they Africans because they are adherents of Ubuntu?'* (Matolino & Kwindigwi, 2013, p. 203). I concur with their view that this tension between ethics and metaphysics is not helpful as it confuses the matter even more. My contention is that if *Ubuntu* is to have any efficacy in modern African societies, it should be demonstrable that it is a theory that transcends pre-colonial socio-economic and political structures. As has been argued elsewhere, these pre-colonial realities no longer obtain and any theory that seeks to return to these conditions renders itself obsolete, a view further developed by Matolino & Kwindigwi (2013). To tie the idea of *Ubuntu* to being African or to tie being African to the adherence of *Ubuntu* does not do justice to what *Ubuntu* mode of being entails. To argue that pre-colonial Africans were more disposed towards *Ubuntu* does not mean that Africans are still so inclined, nor should they be. Worse still, the view that someone is African because they adhere to an *Ubuntu* ethic is equally damaging, parochial and laughable at best. It is such narrow notions of the theory that have solicited scathing criticism from those who have cared to critique *Ubuntu* as a narrative of return. In this light, it can be argued that the narrative of return suffers from contextual irrelevance. By ignoring the reality, that pre-colonial Africa can never be recreated, this narrative of return is self-annihilating. It opens itself to the criticism that it is *'--- a project of elitism couched in ordinary narratives of return'* (Matolino & Kwindigwi, 2013, p. 204). They go on to rightly conclude, *'Its yearning for the restoration of a pristine mode of being is disjoined from the reality of ordinary people'* (ibid. 204). What then is the alternative to *Ubuntu* as a narrative of return?

A question has been asked and we must continue to ask until we have established an answer to it. Or should we? It is after all through asking relevant questions that we expand the boundaries of our thought world into the 'unthought'. Evidently, the impact of colonialism to Africa was the introduction of Western values and systems to the African continent. A post-colonial Africa is a

Westernised Africa (or should I say hybridised Africa), in some instances, stripped of its traditional values, concepts, and sense of being. With the end of the formalised administrative colonial rule the question for the formerly colonised is, what kind of Africa are we building as formally colonised Africans? Does a continuation of Western socio-economic and political systems do justice to Africa?

There are those who have advocated for the return to *Ubuntu*. They have suggested that we should become *abantu* once again (Tutu, 1999; Ramose, 2002). But what does this mean and what does it look like? Do we even know what *Ubuntu* is anymore, given the dehumanising experiences we have suffered under the colonial rule? How can one who has lost *Ubuntu* regain *Ubuntu* unless we know what *Ubuntu* is?

The narrative of return is always juxtaposed against that of perpetuating the status quo, but to whose benefit? Given that Africa was westernised wilfully and purposefully throughout the colonial period, why is it that those of Western orientation such as van Binsbergen (2001), find it problematic to Africanise Africa once again? Are they genuine in their critique of the narrative of return or are they defending their own interests in the hope of continuing with the logic of coloniality? These and other questions need to be answered, if we are to offer a justifiable theory of social justice in post-colonial Zimbabwe. I have deliberately asked a few questions without offering answers, to highlight the problems associated with thinking in these binary terms. I want to argue that the two arguments discussed above, i.e. the narrative of return and the perpetuation of a neo-colonial Southern Africa are not necessarily the only options available. I argue that both these positions are flawed as already argued above. Instead, I offer the concept of *Ubuntu* as 'being, becoming and belonging' to which I now turn.

3.3.3: *Ubuntu* as being, becoming and belonging.

The third option, to which I subscribe, argues that the tension between 'thought' and 'unthought' does not necessarily lead one way or the other in its resolution. In fact, that tension keeps a balance

between the two binaries. In this thesis, I argue that *Ubuntu* is a state of being, becoming and belonging. A state of being in the sense that we all are, whether we understand who we are or not, but we are also in the process of becoming, becoming fully human (*abantu*). We only become fully *abantu* when we belong to a community of other persons (Gyekye, 1992, 1995, Chilisa, 2012). It is in what we are becoming that I want to argue for becoming *abantu*. In a sense, I am arguing that it is not in itself wrong to want to return to the values of *Ubuntu*, provided we have an understanding that it is our being that determines our becoming. In another sense, human agency is derived from 'essence'. As *abantu* (humans) who have experienced colonialism, our becoming fully human again is impacted by our past and current realities. Like all developing things, the direction of travel is always characteristic of that which develops and in this case characteristic of *Ubuntu*. If it is 'thought' that helps us in unpicking 'unthought' then it is imperative to understand that a call to become *abantu* is not the same as what Matolino & Kwindigwi (2013) argue against when they call for the end of *Ubuntu*. To call for the end of *Ubuntu* is to destroy the balance, the tension between being and becoming and leads to total annihilation of Southern African people as *abantu*. This is because to be fully human in this relational ontology, epistemology and axiology demands that one must belong. This is because being African in this sense is not just about being born in a given geographical location. Rather, it is more about developing the values of *Ubuntu* and continuing to do so as a way of life (becoming). This is what being and becoming as used in this thesis entails, and for that reason, *Ubuntu* cannot end when *abantu* still exists as Matolino & Kwindigwi (2013) argue for.

What then are the values that frame our understanding of *Ubuntu* and how can those values help frame what we become considering our being in the current globalised and neo-liberalised world?

We have already seen that the concept of *Ubuntu* as a mode of being rests on the co-values of communalism and interdependence. These are expressive of humanness, sharing, respect, caring and compassion (Samkange & Samkange, 1980; Mthembu, 1996). These expressions are however not fixed in interpretations nor are they limited to a specific period in history. It is for this reason

that I strongly argue against the idea that *Ubuntu* is a narrative of return, as there is no need to return to a particular period in history to meaningfully talk and express the co-values of *Ubuntu*, which are communalism and interdependence. Neither is it necessary to see the expressions of these concepts as fixed. Whatever the historical epoch is, the co-values of *Ubuntu* are communalism and interdependence.

Firstly, I want to suggest that the concept of *Ubuntu* should be understood as a dynamic concept that has evolved overtime and the historical experiences of people within Southern Africa will have shaped the specific interpretations of its meaning in different African countries. Emphasis given to the different expressions of the concept would no doubt, be informed by people's lived experiences. In South Africa and Zimbabwe for instance, where segregation had been the hallmark of the colonial governments, it is understandable why the idea of interconnectedness would find stronger expression as part of the concept of *Ubuntu* after the two countries attained independence (Gade, 2011). Similarly, the highlighting of tribal differences between the *Shona* and the *Ndebele* by the imperialists as part of their divide and rule ideology in Zimbabwe, would necessitate a counter ideological emphasis of interconnectedness and interdependence in the conceptualisation of *Ubuntu* in independent Zimbabwe. These are a few examples of how the concept could have evolved overtime in different countries influenced by specific socio-economic and political experiences. Consequently, Matolino & Kwindigwi's (2014) argument that *Ubuntu* as a narrative of return is now an irrelevant concept because the pre-colonial conditions under which it thrived no longer exist demonstrates either a limited understanding of this concept or reflects a rigid interpretation of what *Ubuntu* entails as a dynamic evolving concept of being and becoming.

Secondly, I want to posit the idea that *Ubuntu* is both a moral quality of a person and a worldview. What Gade (2012, p. 487) calls a philosophy or an African ethic, '--- according to which persons are interconnected'. While there are scholars who want to separate these two responses to what

Ubuntu is, my position is that in practice the two understandings are not distinct and therefore separating them distorts the meaning and gives a narrow interpretation.

3.4: Conclusion.

The interplay between the three conceptualisations of the concept of *Ubuntu* discussed in this chapter can be seen as dialectical in nature. I want to posit that the idea of *Ubuntu* as represented by Mbiti (1969), Samkange and Samkange (1980), Ramose (2007), Murove (2009), Prozesky (2009), Gade (2012) amongst others of similar views can be viewed as the thesis. This is the idea that *Ubuntu* is a uniquely African conceptualisation of being and it is this conceptualisation that should shape our understanding of Southern Africans qua Southern Africans and the value systems thereof. The antithesis to this argument is represented by van Binsbergen (2001), Matolino (2010), Matolino and Kwindigwi (2014), and others who have argued that *Ubuntu* is an ideological, utopian and prophetic concept not representative of those it is claimed to represent and is simply a narrative of return to pre-colonial Africa. *Ubuntu* is therefore construed as a reactionary philosophy without an independent foundation outside Western philosophical thought, a vision of African thought forms devoid of its colonial heritage.

As argued in this chapter, there is a third way of looking at this concept and I want to posit that this is the synthesis of the first two ideas. It is the position that to dismiss *Ubuntu* as purely a narrative of return is not only mischievous, but philosophically empty and historically naïve. van Binsbergen and his camp appear to be blinded by the logic of coloniality to the point of playing politics about the pith of Southern African philosophy of being. To argue that selfish interests motivate those who advocate for *Ubuntu*, as van Binsbergen (2001) argues, raises questions about his agenda in his critique of *Ubuntu*. What is positive though, is that their position has offered a challenge to those who take *Ubuntu* at face value, those who assume that the concept of *Ubuntu* remains pure, pristine and unadulterated by Western philosophies and thought. I have argued that the tension between

these two conceptualisations of *Ubuntu* offers a new way of understanding, which is the synthesis of the two. This is the new thesis that I want to posit as my theory of *Ubuntu* and my interpretive lens in this thesis.

Pre-colonial Southern Africa no longer exist, and it would be naïve to think we can return to it. Not only is it a logical impossibility, but also practically, a conundrum. How can we, for instance return to something that does not exist anymore? While the idea of returning to an *Ubuntu* informed way of thinking and therefore, way of life is plausible, we would do well to recognise that the destination can never be where Africa was in pre-colonial times. This argument is a good example of the compatibility between my relational realist ontology and relational constructionist epistemology. *Ubuntu* philosophy can only offer guiding principles and a moral compass enabling the present and future generations to begin a new journey into a decolonised Africa that is free from the dehumanising experiences of both colonialism and apartheid. In this light *Ubuntu* is viewed as an option to the Eurocentric logic of coloniality that has continued to bedevil the so-called post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Given that our thinking is limited by what we already know and who and what we want to become, it follows that to characterise *Ubuntu* as a narrative of return is to misrepresent what *Ubuntu* is. Cast as a narrative of return one can see why scholars like Matolino & Kwindigwi (2013) argue for the end of *Ubuntu*. Similarly, to characterise *Ubuntu* as representing the authentic African mode of being is to limit what it means to be African in the 21st century. It is to put a cap on what it means to be African to pre-colonial modes of being and thought. This is because if the narrative of return is representative of what it means to be African, it would also logically follow that such a narrative is necessary in and of itself. This, however, would imply that being African and African life is monolithic. Not only monolithic but also, has reached its zenith in terms of development. Such a position would be problematic, however attractive it might seem, to those inspired by Pan Africanist ideology.

Matolino & Kwindigwi have identified three problems with this monolithic conceptualisation of being African. They sum their conclusions as follows;

First, it renders Africans – either in their pristine conditions or in their current station – as incapable of individual or dissenting thought. Second, it makes African life hegemonic in its pursuit of a particularised African idealised mode of being. Third, it appears to be traditionalist for the sake of being traditionalist as it limits its advocacy to a narrative of return without paying attention to how other dynamics could possibly shape and direct current African life (Matolino & Kwindigwi, 2013, p. 199)

It is for this reason that I advocate for a third position. Firstly, we must recognise that coloniality and its implications for African communities is not an option for those who call themselves *abantu*. This point is significant as would be evident when I discuss colonial education in Zimbabwe and the kind of education that is ‘desirable’ for the postcolonial era. It is therefore imperative that we reclaim as much of that pre-colonial past as we can to try to restore African dignity and identity. It is however equally, important to recognise that part of that history cannot be completely reclaimed, nor restored hence the need to think beyond the past into a possible future, that captures the best of our shared realities. In this thesis, therefore I seek to draw on an *Ubuntu* mode of social justice in order to inform my discussion on educational issues in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

Secondly, based on Matolino & Kwindigwi’s (2013) critique of the narrative of return, pre-colonial Africa was never pristine nor monolithic hence to interpret *Ubuntu* in such terms would be to miss the point and peddle an agenda unrepresentative of those it seeks to serve. Africans do have dissenting thoughts and even if they did not have that in pre-colonial times, they certainly do now, and it would be pretentious to think otherwise. Any mode of being that fails to recognise this truism would be guilty of the same charges that we so often level against colonialists, that is, demeaning African people as though they are incapable of expressing for themselves who they are and how they would want to live their lives.

Thirdly, one of the tragedies of postcolonial Africa has been the hegemonisation of African political thought in the pursuit of a particularised mode of being, socially, economically and politically by

those who have taken political leadership and power (Dzvimbo, 1991). The idea that there is only one form of political system that would usher in a prosperous postcolonial Africa has been responsible for the debilitation and destruction of otherwise economically stable countries at independence, to failed states like Zimbabwe today. It is therefore important that in the pursuit of becoming *abantu* once again, 'we' do not create new hegemonic systems.

Finally, the socio economic and political dynamics in Southern Africa have since changed and we now live in a more 'globalised' world. As such, some of the values and forms of being that might have been relevant to the socio-economic and political conditions in pre-colonial times no longer obtain. For that reason, *Ubuntu* theory of social justice relevant to 'modern' Zimbabwe would be different from that which was relevant to pre-colonial Zimbabwe. It is this contextualised mode of being, that I seek to discuss in the subsequent chapters. Considering the above discussion, how can we characterise an *Ubuntu* theory of Social Justice? In the next chapter, I develop this theory.

Chapter 4

***Ubuntu* Theory of Social Justice.**

4.1: Introduction.

One of the biggest fallacies created by Western civilisation or modernity/coloniality as discussed by Asante (1998), Mignolo (2011) and Ndlovu- Gatsheni (2018) amongst others, is the fallacy of universalisation. This is the idea that there is only one correct way of being in the world and that way is the Euro-Western way. This analysis is reflected in the dominant research methodologies which while indigenous to the Euro-Western world, have been projected and enacted in the non-Euro-Western world as though they were universal (Asante, 1998; Chilissa and Ntseane, 2010; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). This way of thinking has resulted in the marginalisation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and the imposition of Euro –Western knowledge, what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) calls the epistemic violence of the logic of coloniality. In this chapter, I argue that while the concept of social justice is indeed a global concept (in so far as it is the naming of the relationship that obtains amongst people), its expression is not and does not have to be. I contend that any theory of social justice needs to be contextual and thus informed by the socio-economic, historical, cultural and political variables relevant to the place of application. Any analysis of social justice issues in Zimbabwe should be premised on Zimbabwean cultural contexts, otherwise they are likely to result in incorrect conclusions. Finally, social justice, particularly in education cannot obtain in a context still dominated by Euro-Western coloniality.

Having outlined *Ubuntu* philosophy both as human moral qualities and as a worldview in chapter three, it is now possible for me to offer an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. This theory will be used as an interpretive tool in my critique of the EFA policy. Two key principles have been identified as central to any conceptualisation of *Ubuntu* philosophy. These are *Ubuntu* as communalism and

Ubuntu as interdependence (Gyekye, 1992, 1995; Murove, 2009; Chilisa, 2012; Gade, 2014). These two principles are only separated here for purposes of clarity, otherwise in reality they are intertwined in our understanding of the philosophy of *Ubuntu*. This is because this worldview recognises the interconnectedness and interdependence of all things (Chilisa, 2012). In essence, one implies and attests to the other. As Sefa Dei *et al.* (2002, p. 9) argued: '*Seeking truth and coming to know necessitates studying the cycles, relationships and connections between things*'. In the next section I explore the implications of this relational way of being and knowing in the development of *Ubuntu* praxis.

4.2: *Ubuntu* theory of social justice.

In chapter two I argued that *Ubuntu* methodology is underpinned by a relational ontology, epistemology and axiology. This relational worldview demands that interconnectedness and interdependence become the glue that binds all things together in these unending cycles of interaction at all levels. *Ubuntu* theory of social justice is therefore about how interconnected and interdependent people relate not only to each other but also to their environment and the spiritual world beyond them. In this chapter I identify three concepts through which I intend to discuss *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. These are encapsulated in the Ndebele maxim "*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" i.e. "a person is a person through other persons" (Shutte, 1993, p. 46). I like Van der Merwe's expanded version which translates this principle to; "*To be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognising the humanity of others in its infinite variety of content and form*" (Van der Merwe, 1996, p. 1). The three concepts are; *Ubuntu* social justice as relational; *Ubuntu* social justice as respect for Self and Other and *Ubuntu* social justice as respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging (Gyekye, 1995; Chilisa, 2012; Molefe, 2017). As highlighted in chapter two these ideas are separated to help us unpick the meaning, otherwise in reality they are all intertwined in what it means to be human (*umuntu*).

4.2.1: *Ubuntu* social justice as relational.

As argued in chapters two and three, *Ubuntu* philosophy is based on a relational ontology, epistemology and axiology (Chilisa, 2012). These philosophical assumptions have far reaching implications when we look at the theory of social justice underpinned by *Ubuntu*. This relational worldview necessitates an emphasis on ‘--- an I/We relationship as opposed to the Western I/You relationship with its emphasis on the individual’ (Ibid, p. 20). As portrayed by other scholars, this understanding of who we are as human beings implies, communality, human unity, togetherness, interdependence, collectivity, social justice, plurality and any other phrases that engenders a relational ontology of humanity (Ndaba, 1994; Teffo, 1994a, 1994b, 1995; Asante, 1998; Louw, 2001; Smith, 2012). According to Desmond Tutu *Ubuntu* ‘--- is the very essence of being human’ (1999, p. 33). This view is also supported by Samkange & Samkange (1980) and Metz (2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2015) who see *Ubuntu* as an ethical framework of personhood. If the positions held by these scholars, and others of similar persuasion are valid, and *Ubuntu* is both an ethical framework and the essence of being human, it also follows that social justice is part and parcel of what it means to be human. Informed by this line of reasoning and understanding, social justice in *Ubuntu* philosophy is integral and therefore implied by what it means to be human. As a relational concept social justice ceases to be an attribute exhibited by *abantu* (persons) but rather it becomes part of what it means to be *umuntu* (person).

In this context social justice is a relational axiological concept. It attests to and speaks of the acceptable and shared values of those who call themselves *abantu*. It is about how these people relate. Social justice is therefore culturally specific, drawing on shared assumptions about the nature of being, how we arrive at this common understanding and the values that inform what is perceived to be in the best interest of all, and all possible relationships in that context. The importance of the, I/We relationship cannot be over emphasised in this understanding of social justice. Justice in this

light is not based on individual rights but rather the collective rights of the 'WE' in the I/We relationship. As Chilisa (2012) argues, this relationship also extends to the non-living and the environment. The out working or expression of the, I/We relationship in any context leads me to the second aspect of *Ubuntu* theory of social justice which is respect for Self and Other.

4.2.2: *Ubuntu* Social Justice as respect for Self and Other.

How does the self (I) and the other (We) reconcile their interests in a socially just way? Consensus building is central to an *Ubuntu* worldview and an understanding of what it means to respect oneself and others in this relational, interconnected and interdependent mode of being. Louw (2001, 2004) points out that *Ubuntu* puts emphasis on the importance of agreement and consensus particularly where decisions are being taken. Amongst the Ndebele in Zimbabwe, traditionally, there was provision for a meeting place (*edale*) where community leaders would meet to discuss any issue affecting the community. Consensus at these meetings was paramount and this tended to result in long winded meetings at times going on for weeks until there was agreement on what action needed to be taken. As Chilisa (2012) observes; while there might be a hierarchy of importance as far as speakers at these meetings were concerned, all participants would be given a chance to speak until some form of consensus or agreement was reached. It is this quest for agreement and group cohesion that attests to the *Ubuntu* spirit of respect for self and the other. Ensuring all involved left the meeting with a sense of satisfaction that all had been done to accommodate their views regardless of the outcomes of the deliberations. In fact, in the true *Ubuntu* spirit, when one member of the community suffers, the whole community suffers and when one rejoices the whole community rejoices (see appendix F). This is captured in sayings such as “simunye” meaning we are one. In my own rural area of Matobo in Zimbabwe it is common to hear elders saying “*sesiliphane*” with reference to new relationships being formed between two families when their children marry. *Iphe* is the *Mophe* tree which is the dominant tree found in the area. The meaning and implication of this saying is that the two families are now like one big *Mophe* forest, where it is

difficult to distinguish the trees individually. In a way, as these two families come together through marriage, they become one family, once again alluding to the concepts of interconnectedness and interdependence discussed above.

Within the context of *Ubuntu*, the desire and quest for consensus is perceived as a safeguard for the rights and opinions of those less powerful and minorities. However, as Sono (1994), Louw (1997) rightly observes, this desire for consensus and over emphasis on community can be exploited to enforce group solidarity. Sono sums this point succinctly when he points out that;

[t]o agree is more important than to disagree; conformity is cherished more than innovation. Tradition is venerated, continuity revered, change feared and difference shunned. Heresies [i.e. the innovative creations of intellectual African individuals, or refusal to participate in communalism] are not tolerated in such communities (Sono, 1994, p. 7).

While this observation is correct and there are many examples where *Ubuntu* values and traditions are used to oppress women and children, it is obvious that this is not the true interpretation and expression of an *Ubuntu* culture and values. As Sindane (1994) would argue, this derailment of *Ubuntu* is not necessary. What *Ubuntu* advocates for is, ‘---an authentic respect for human/individual rights and related values, and an honest appreciation of differences (Sindane, 1994, p. 7). This last point by Sindane is expressed fully in the next section which focusses on the concept of *Ubuntu* social justice as respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging.

4.2.3: *Ubuntu* social justice as respect for Particularity, Individuality, Historicity and Belonging.

Particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging are important elements of an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. Sindane observes that in the *Ubuntu* ethical framework, ‘--- we expose ourselves to others to encounter the difference of their humanness so as to inform and enrich our own’ (Sindane, 1994, pp. 8 -9). This expression of *Ubuntu* ethical framework underscores *Ubuntu*’s respect for particularity, individuality and historicity. It also dovetails with Van der Merwe’s translation of the maxim ‘*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*’ translated as; ‘[t]o be human is to affirm one’s humanity by

recognising the humanity of others in its infinite variety of content and form' (Van der Merwe, 1996, p. 1). I want to contend that without respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging, social justice is not possible in an *Ubuntu* world view. This is because of the idea of *Ubuntu* as interconnected and interdependent. This point will be illustrated in chapter seven when reflecting on the EFA policy highlighting how it is empty of this logic. According to Louw (2001) Wiredu offers us another understanding or interpretation of the '*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*' maxim. This is the idea that '*--- a human being is a human being through the otherness of other human beings*' (Wiredu, 1995, quoted in Louw, 2001, p. 3). The idea here is that social justice finds its fullness when we fully recognise and respect the otherness of others as we interact with them.

Ubuntu's respect for the particularity of the other is closely linked to the respect for individuality. As discussed in chapter three this is not the Cartesian concept of individuality or the self. In fact, *Ubuntu* conceptualisation of the individual or self contradicts the Cartesian understanding in that while Descartes conceived of the individual to the exclusion of the other, *Ubuntu* conceptualisation is in direct contrast. Louw (2001) makes a poignant point when noting that; '*The Cartesian individual exists prior to, or separately and independently from the rest of the community or society. The rest of society is nothing but an added extra to a pre-existent and self-sufficient being*' (Louw, 2001, p. 4). To the contrary *Ubuntu* conceptualisation of the self is with or within the other (Shutte, 1993; Wiredu, 1995). In other words, there is no 'I' without a 'We' and there is no 'We' without an 'I'. This understanding of the individual alludes to 'a plurality of personalities corresponding to the multiplicity of relationships in which the individual in question stands' (Louw, 2001, p. 5). As Chilisa concludes;

[u]buntu incorporates dialogue, preserving the other in their otherness, in their uniqueness, without letting the other slip into a distance. It embraces a perception of the Other that is never fixed or rigidly closed but adjustable or open ended (Chilisa, 2012, p. 187).

The implications of this *Ubuntu* conceptualisation of the self has a bearing on what social justice is. In the West, the focus is on the individual and therefore based on individual rights while in the

Ubuntu conceptualisation, social justice is anchored in mutuality and interdependence between the Self and the Other.

To this end social justice cannot be measured just in terms of individual rights, but rather in terms of the mutual benefits that accrue from a mutually beneficial web of relationships that transcends every aspect of life right through to the afterlife. It is also for this reason that beliefs in the supernatural and God are not individual beliefs but rather communal beliefs that individuals participate in for the mutual benefit to all (Tournas, 1996; Tutu, 1999; Chilisa, 2012). It is this web of intertwined relationships that makes it difficult to define *Ubuntu* only in terms of specific human attributes to the exclusion of other relations, for instance, with the dead, the environment, the spiritual domains including God. As Chilisa (2012, p. 186) notes: *'Understanding this type of reality requires a back and forth movement that connects to this web of relations'*. To reduce *Ubuntu* to attributes of an individual would mean that, when it comes to social justice, it would be possible for an individual to claim that they could be socially just without reference to others. Yet as we have seen in this discussion *Ubuntu* social justice is impossible outside a relational context. This has far reaching implications for social justice in education as will be developed in chapter seven.

Secondly, *Ubuntu* theory of social justice consists of the principle of mutual respect as reflected in the importance of agreement and consensus (Louw, 2001). To be just means valuing the views and needs of others beyond your own and living in a manner that embraces those values. As Chilisa observes; *'---true Ubuntu takes plurality seriously'* (2012, p. 187). In other words, agreement and consensus does not entail the oppression of the voices of the 'weak'. Rather, there are always mechanisms to ensure that the final decision taken on any issue is reflective of the community spirit and the collective good. In fact, there are safeguards to protect the interests of the elderly, children and the vulnerable in any social context (Teffo, 1994a, 1994b; Gyekye, 1995).

Thirdly, *Ubuntu* understanding of justice involves respect for particularity, individuality, and historicity (Louw, 2001). This conceptualisation is well supported by Sindane (1994) quoted above. This open attitude towards otherness enables the individual to engage with the others without

expecting the other to conform. Amongst the Ndebele people in Zimbabwe otherness is also reflected in the way visitors are welcomed and looked after. The level of hospitality offered to a visitor is always reflective of community values rather than individual values. An individual does not necessarily need to be known at a personal level if their family or people group is known. As such individual and group identity remains in an open-ended flux facilitating reciprocity between and amongst people. This point leads to the last element which is respect for belonging.

‘I am because we are’ speaks of the importance and value of belonging. It is this sense of belonging, whether to a family, tribe, nation or region that defines relationality. To belong has both rights and responsibilities and it is the extent to which an individual is prepared to seed their individual rights to the group and the group’s preparedness in safeguarding those rights that is expressive of *Ubuntu* social justice. Social justice is therefore a relational concept as discussed above. Given that belonging is relational and involves the ‘I’ seeding their rights to the ‘We’ and the ‘We’ safeguarding those rights; *Ubuntu* social justice becomes a relational contract between and amongst all those who belong. To be therefore is to belong, and to belong is to be fully human (*umuntu*). Social justice therefore is what makes *abantu*, *abantu* (*Humans*).

4.3: Conclusion.

In any attempt to define a concept such as social justice, the temptation is always to be reductive, that is, to try and identify characteristics or qualities without which this concept become anything else other than the concept being defined. After all, to define is to reduce to only that which the thing is and nothing else. However, in this chapter I have argued that *Ubuntu* theory of social justice is a relational concept. Relational because of its relational ontology, epistemology and axiology. As such instead of seeking to isolate this concept and exclude everything else that it is not, my approach has been to identify those concepts without which its relational status would be meaningless.

I have therefore identified three key definitional concept associations as that is what relational entails. Firstly, we noted that as a relational concept, *Ubuntu* theory of social justice can only be understood as part of what it means to be *Umuntu*. In other words, without social justice there is no '*Buntu*'. It is equally important that we do not reduce *Ubuntu* to social justice as *Ubuntu* is more than just social justice. In the same way as *Ubuntu* is 'being and becoming,' social justice as a relational concept 'is' and 'is becoming'. What it is and what it is becoming, is always determined by the relational context existent at any given time. Secondly, I argued that *Ubuntu* social justice is respect for 'Self' and 'Other'. Here the emphasis is on the value of the 'I/ We' dichotomy. How does the 'Self' and 'Other' resolve their interests in a just relational way? It was argued that this is achieved through consensus building (Louw, 2001). Thirdly, *Ubuntu* social justice expresses itself in the respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging (Chilisa, 2012). I argue that *Ubuntu* social justice can be found where particularity, individuality, historicity intersects. As this is relational, it follows that this intersection is not static hence the need for a more dynamic relational understanding of social justice. In the 'true' spirit of a relational methodology I have avoided committing myself to a reductive definition of *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. This is because to do so will be to undermine the concept of a relational epistemology. However, what I have achieved is to develop an understanding of the principles that are at play in *Ubuntu* social justice and it is these principles that will be used in my critique and analysis of the EFA policy.

Chapter 5

Colonial Education in Zimbabwe.

5.1: Introduction.

Zimbabwe, a former British colony gained independence in 1980 after 90 years of colonial rule and subjugation. Formally known as Southern Rhodesia, then Rhodesia having been named after Cecil John Rhodes who led the colonial escapades into this part of Southern Africa under the British South African Company (BSAC), the country was annexed from the BSAC by the British government in 1923 (Kanyongo, 2005). It is important to point out from the outset that until 1980, Zimbabwe remained a racially and educationally segregated society. As Richards & Govere observed,

[t]his racist society was developed and maintained through the implementation of a series of legal, economic, political, and social structures that were enacted by the colonisers. For example, the 1891 Masters and Servants Act; the 1898 Direct Rule Policy; 1902 Pass Laws; 1900, 1904, 1956 Hut Taxes; 1930 Land Apportionment Act; 1931 Public Service Act; 1934 Industrial Conciliation Act; 1936 Native Registration Act; 1946 Native Accommodation and Registration Act; and the 1969 Land Tenure Act (Richards & Govere, 2003, p. 138).

While I concur with Bowman (1973) who argues that these Acts were the foundations upon which Rhodesia's colonial society was built, I want to further argue that it is in the colonial education Acts, that we see the planned subservient role the African people would play in Rhodesian society. It is these education acts and their implications for the African people that I want to address in this chapter. In this thesis the word 'African' is used to denote the indigenous (Black) people of Zimbabwe while the word 'European' refers to the white colonialists. It is important to recognise from the outset that the use of the concepts, 'African' and 'European' is more complex than is portrayed here. Not all Europeans or white people shared the racist colonial ideologies as some fought alongside the blacks to end colonialism and develop a more socially just society. Similarly, there were some blacks who due to their relatively privileged positions within the system wanted

the status quo to remain. However, for the ease of language usage in this thesis I use these terms as above, but with a clear understanding that they may be contestable.

The colonial legacy of inequality and hence social injustice inherited by the new government in 1980 had engulfed and permeated all aspects of life; political, economic, social and educational. As Dorsey soundly observes;

[t]he society was stratified mainly on racial criteria, which were the bases for ordering nearly all social relations. Whites, who constituted only 3.5 percent of the population of 7,500,000, controlled the economic and political structures and enjoyed the highest rewards that flowed from them, while blacks, who constituted the majority, had little control and the lowest rewards (Dorsey, 1989, p. 41).

The segregation of every aspect of life, particularly land, into European and African areas led to the 'pauperisation' of Africans, making them more and more dependent on the colonial systems and thus undermined their traditional ways of living and becoming more disempowered in the process.

As Dorsey concludes, '*--- continued manipulation of the economic, political, and educational structures was particularly important in maintaining white dominance during the colonial era*' (ibid. p. 41).

In this chapter, I seek to provide a historical context within which the EFA policy should be understood, interpreted, analysed and evaluated. The educational infrastructure in Zimbabwe in 1980 is a product of and designed to meet a specific agenda which if not identified, understood and deconstructed would lead to problems for years to come. What then is colonial education in Zimbabwe?

5.2: Education under Colonial Rule.

To understand the education system and policies in Rhodesia we need to understand the purpose, as purpose always precedes design. The purpose of colonial education in Zimbabwe is best framed through the Education Acts which are; '*1899 Education Ordinance; 1903 Education Ordinance; 1907*

Education Ordinance; 1929 Department of Native Development Act; 1930 Compulsory Education Act; 1959 African Education Act; 1973 Education Act; and the 1979 Education Act' (Richards & Govere, 2003, p. 138). Black (1977, cited in Richards & Govere, 2003) soundly concluded that the purpose of these Acts was to legitimise the racial segregation and protect the settlers' economic advantage. The colonial government developed policies limiting contact between Europeans and Africans, and where there was such contact it was to be controlled giving advantage to the Europeans. This is an analysis corroborated by Rogers & Frantz (1962) and Mumbengegwi (1989) who further argue that Europeans believed that Africans needed to be acculturated into European values before they could lead equal but separate lives. One can conclude that such policies were informed by the European's belief that Africans were both intellectually and culturally inferior to them, hence the need to live separate lives, a conclusion also reached by Madambi & Mangena (2016).

Colonial education in Rhodesia is replete with evidence that Europeans treated Africans as a sub-human species. This position is well argued by Madambi & Mangena when observing that; *'[i]n scientific and humanities scholarship, theories were postulated and literature was produced to substantiate the inferiority of the Black race and to reinforce the supremacy of the white race, with a complete and strategic thrust to keep the African a passive and subservient instrument of labour'* (2016, p. 117). This philosophic racism was used to justify the logic behind the education policies that are the subject of my focus in this chapter. Underpinning this philosophical racism were views of prominent western thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, Charles Darwin, GWF Hegel, David Hume and Lucien Levy-Bruhl amongst others (Ibid, 2016). Levy-Bruhl's concept of 'Primitive mentality' used with reference to Africans is another example of this philosophic racism and the logic underpinning it (Madambi & Mangena, 2016). Fanon identifies this philosophical racism when positing that, *'...the white man had a myth that the Negro is a stage on the slow evolution of monkey into man'* (1986, p. 7) To this end, research was conducted by Europeans to try and prove that Africans were intellectually and culturally inferior thus trying to justify the policy direction taken by the European

imperialist throughout Africa (Rodney, 1981; Nicholas, 1993; Eze, 1997). Due to this supremacist attitude, most Europeans saw Africans as nothing more than their labourers and as such they instituted an education system that was designed to develop Africans as such. Zindi succinctly sums up the European's attitude towards African education when he says '*---the Rhodesian system was designed to prepare African children for their pre-determined status in life – that of labourer or servant who would serve his/her white masters . . .*' (Zindi, 1996, p. 45). The fact that Europeans had denied the Africans humanity, they equally disqualified them from epistemic virtue. The colonial education system therefore reflects this imperial reasoning which reduced Africans to a sub-human category lacking in both ontological and epistemological human status. This is an enactment of what Mignolo (2011) calls the 'the darker side of Western modernity'. With philosophical racism as the foundations, colonial education in Zimbabwe can be viewed as an exercise in subordination and exploitation.

So, from the arrival of the Europeans in 1890 there were broadly, three groups within the education system. Firstly, there were the indigenous Black Africans, who as subjects to ruthless colonial masters had no say in how they would be educated as this was a new system that did not take cognisance of their traditional ways of life, unless it suited the colonial master. Secondly, there were the missionaries who though they were part of the European settler community, had a slightly different agenda as theirs was to spread Christianity and as such educating the Africans was a means to that end. Finally, there were the imperialists themselves whose only interest was to further their fortunes in this new territory and Africans were only important to that end (Kanyongo, 2005). Given these divergent interests, there was always going to be social justice issues to contend with. An analysis of the education acts and ordinances during the colonial era would offer us a clearer picture of both the intent and the actual development of the education system in Rhodesia.

5.2.1: The 1899 Education Ordinance.

The 1899 Education Ordinance gave the Rhodesian colonial administration complete control over the education system in the country (Richards & Govere, 2003). Up to this point in the development of formal education in Rhodesia, the colonial government was not involved in the education of Africans as African education was provided by missionaries while the colonial government looked after the educational interests of the Europeans. Africans had no say in what went on in formal education and their traditional systems were deemed to be of no value to the new market economy. While this ordinance was still focussed on educational provision for the European children, it also sought to control what the missionaries were doing in their schools. According to Richards & Govere (2003) this ordinance created three types of schools namely, the non-denominational government public schools for European children; voluntary religious denominational schools under government management, designed for European children and 'native' mission schools designed for African children. The first two types of schools were exclusively for European students and offered an academic curriculum not offered in the mission schools, thus crucially maintaining segregation.

This Act therefore ensured that African children would not receive the same quality of education offered to European children. For the first time the Act provided mission schools with a small grant as subsidies. However, this was designed to give the colonial government controlling power over mission schools through inspections that were attached to all educational grants. (Kadhani & Riddell, 1982). The colonial administration wanted to ensure that the missionaries would not overeducate the Africans. This objective of the colonial administration could not be more explicit as in the 1925 Native Affairs Department Annual Report which categorically stated that *'The objectives of our native policy (are to ensure) the development of the native in such a way that he will come as little as possible into conflict or competition with the white man socially, economically or politically'* (Riddell,

1980, p. 25). The Act further regulated the curriculum, with 50% of the time in African schools being spent on industrial training. As Richards & Govere concludes;

[t]his ordinance endorsed the denial of equal educational opportunity for the majority of the citizens of Rhodesia and legitimised the oppression of the African people. In essence, this act also ensured European male power and control in colonial society as it did not provide equal access or opportunity for any females, European or African, in the education system. African females were not even mentioned in the act (Richards & Govere, 2003, p. 139).

From the above outline and analysis, it is evident that the purpose of this Ordinance was more in legalising inequality and injustice and education was a vehicle for perpetuating this socio-economic and political order. It is also significant to conclude this section by observing that missionary education was not socially just either. Its purpose was to destroy and replace the African's traditional belief system with that of the Euro-Westerner, thereby inflicting the same epistemic and religious violence consistent with the logic of coloniality.

5.2.2: The 1903 Education Ordinance.

The 1903 Education Ordinance like its predecessor denied Africans equal access and equal opportunity in the educational system. This ordinance however recognised children of mixed heritage. The school system was restructured into three separate systems based on race. These were, '*Voluntary and non-denominational public schools for European students only, mission schools for native students, and schools for Coloured students*' (Richards & Govere, 2003, p. 140). While the 1903 ordinance provided for better funding for all schools, amounts spent on African and coloured schools were a pittance relative to what was spent on European schools. Another significant change this time was the removal of discrimination to female European children who were now accorded equal status to their male counterparts. However, female Africans and coloureds were not mentioned in the ordinance. In this light the discriminatory attitudes expressed through these ordinances were continued. Non-European female students were completely excluded from educational provision in both the 1899 and the 1903 ordinances. (The Education Ordinance No. 1 Order D Sect. 1 (1903). This is an issue that I will pick up in the next chapter.

5.2.3: 1907 Education Ordinance.

In 1907 a new Education Ordinance was introduced. This was in response to the European fears that Africans were being overeducated and were to soon compete economically with their colonial masters (Rogers & Frantz, 1962). This was after some Africans who had been trained in farming were proving to be more productive than their European peers. Consequently, the education system was restructured again. There were to be three types of schools; First class, Second class and Third-class schools (Richards & Govere, 2003). While the First- and Second-class schools were under European supervision, the Third-class schools were under the supervision of missionaries and received minimal funding from the government. According to Rogers & Frantz (1962), while in principle any school could be a First-class school, missionaries found that it was impossible for African schools to be First or Second class as the government was not providing funding to these schools and as such they would not meet the inspection criteria which stipulated the quality of education taking place in each category. Mission schools did not have the level of resources required. As such, they would not receive the funding that went with being a First- or Second-class school. Resultantly, the gap between the quality of education provided for Europeans and Africans continued to widen. This Act was to remain in force until 1929 when the Department of Native Development Act was established (Richards & Govere, 2003).

5.2.4: Department of Native Development Act- 1929.

The advent of the 1920s great depression in Europe and worldwide, worsened the resistance to educate Africans to the same standard as Europeans. Those who advocated for the protection of the economic interests of the Europeans were invigorated in their pursuit of a segregated education system which ensured that Africans would never be in competition with their colonial masters. To this end the Department of Native development Act was implemented. This act saw the complete separation of the African education from Europeans and coloureds. The separation of the

administration of the two education systems meant that Europeans could do what they had always wanted to do without any reference to Africans, that is, provide the best education possible to their children without needing to answer the question of what was happening in the education of the Africans as this was now the role of a difference department. Through this act, Africans were denied academic and professional development, as they were in schools where they only learnt to read and write English to enable them to develop practical skills required in the labour force (Mungazi, 1989; Rogers & Frantz, 1962). It is equally poignant to highlight the fact that the English language was the official language and all learning had to be done in English. This policy put African children at a disadvantage as they had to learn the language before they could access the curriculum, yet there were no additional resources to support the development of these language skills. As such the policy of offering African children practical education to ensure that they had the requisite skills for the industries but also to ensure they were never in economic competition with Europeans (Starks, 1935; Nhundu, 1989). Nhundu(1989) further observes that colonial education was so designed that it resulted in Africans despising their languages, culture, values, even their African names preferring rather to adopt those of the coloniser.

The only positive development with this Act was that it provided the opportunity for the training of African teachers. This development gave the African children better opportunities for accessing the curriculum as they would now be taught by teachers who could speak their mother languages and as such could engage with children using their mother languages. As Richards & Govere (2003) further note, this development opened opportunities for growth and access for more African Children. While this development might appear insignificant, in the bigger scope of things, this was a landmark development as it meant, for the first time Africans would now be partly responsible for the education of their children. A development that would lead to the growing awareness of the Africans to the inequalities inherent in the system and the need for change. Interestingly, the majority of

those who led the armed struggle for independence in the 1960s and 1970s were teachers (Zvobgo, 1981, 1985).

5.2.5: 1930 Compulsory Education Act.

According to Richards & Govere (2003) European education, economic power and competitiveness against the Africans was directly enhanced by this Act. This is because education became compulsory for all European children between the ages of 6 and 15. Given the resources and the quality of education provided for in the European schools this was a master's stroke in ensuring inequality between whites and blacks in Rhodesia, more so, given the fact that education remained voluntary and poorly funded in the African schools. To make matters worse, education was free in government day schools (attended by European children) yet Africans (the least able to pay) had to pay for their education in all mission schools. Only those whose parents could afford the fees were able to continue with their education given that it was voluntary. Coloured and Asian education was made compulsory in 1939. As Mungazi (1982) observes, there were no black students in secondary school in 1930 despite there being over 100,000 African children in mission primary schools. Bringing together the Compulsory Education Act and the Land Apportionment Act which also came into effect in 1930, the European economic power was further strengthened while the Africans were further stripped of their economic power by having their land taken away from them (Weiss, 1997).

As Richards & Govere note;

[t]hese Acts ensured: (1) that European students would be educated enough to provide them with meaningful employment; (2) that Europeans and non-Europeans were separated; (3) Europeans would be provided with the majority of productive land in Zimbabwe; and (4) Europeans had access to highest paying occupations and that career opportunities for non-Europeans were limited (2003, p. 142).

These Acts consolidated the structures for inequality and social injustice in Rhodesia and made it almost impossible to reverse these developments in the future. For example, the fact that blacks and whites resided in separate geographical locations meant that even after independence this structural organisation of people and resources remains difficult to change. In fact, this

infrastructural inequality has given birth to class inequality, with rich people residing in the former white areas and the poor remaining in the less resourced former African residential areas. As we will see in the next chapter the EFA policy was an attempt to address some of these structural inequalities. What is evident however is that the Land Apportionment and the Compulsory Education Acts had far reaching effects on African's economic and political power, making them subservient to their colonial masters for years to come. It is also important to note, that there were no government secondary schools for Africans in Rhodesia until 1946 when Goromonzi Secondary School was opened, with the second government high school for Africans, Fletcher high school opening its doors in 1957 (Richards & Govere, 2003). Given the number of students completing primary education each year, it is obvious that the colonial government had no intention to see every child given opportunities to further their education given the number of places available in these two secondary schools.

With Sir Garfield Todd becoming the prime minister of Rhodesia in 1956, there was a ray of hope for African education as he immediately sought to reform the education system (Mungazi, 1982). However, this hope was soon to be squashed as the settler government rejected both his plans for African education and voting rights reforms. He was forced to resign in 1958 because of his reform plans (Mungazi, 1982; Weiss, 1997). The forced resignation of Sir Garfield Todd reflects how entrenched the colonialist were in ensuring that a racially segregated Rhodesia, where Europeans would maintain their economic and political power was retained. Garfield Todd's reforms were a threat to this objective. For his views on equality, his fight against social injustice and support for Africans, Todd was imprisoned numerous times between 1965 and 1976. It is also during his premiership that European women in Rhodesia were granted the right to vote (Richards & Govere, 2003).

5.2.6: African Education Act 1959 Chapters 97 and 233.

According to Richards & Govere (2003) Chapter 97 of the African Education Act for the first time in the history of colonial education provided for the academic development of African children. While this Act could have far reaching educational and economic gains for the Africans, it was hindered by the fact that in 1959 there were only 5 government secondary schools and 46 primary schools for Africans and they were all in urban areas (Mungazi, 1982). This left most African children living in rural areas outside the education system. Again, for the first time in the history of colonial education Chapter 97 refers to African female students and female teachers. This opened opportunities for females as they were now provided for in the education system (African Education Act, 1959, Chapter 97). For the first time European children could attend African schools and European teachers to teach in those schools. While this was a move in the right direction in terms of integration, the downside was that European children were given priority in the African schools and this meant that African children were further squeezed out of the only government schools they could attend. Segregation was retained in that African children and teachers were still not allowed to attend or teach in European schools. The Act thus allowed for those Europeans who wanted to integrate with Africans to do so without giving Africans any choice on the matter.

An analysis of Chapter 97 shows that while the Act provided for relative liberalisation of the education system and giving opportunities to female students and teachers, the act equally retained and continued to deny equal educational opportunities to Africans and to some extent even took away from them the little spaces they had in the government schools designed for them. European students and teachers had more choice while Africans had even less access. The progress made in Chapter 97 was reversed in Chapter 233 (Richards & Govere, 2003).

Chapter 233 further outlined the role of the state in managing and supervising the schools. All government sponsored schools were now expected to have school boards whose responsibilities were as follow;

1. Impose school fees and collect monies for administering or maintaining the sponsored school or schools concerned and to do such other things that may be prescribed.
2. Prohibit or suspend any student from attending at a sponsored school if any fees imposed in relation to his/her attendance at that school were not paid when they became due.
3. Pay the cost of the administering and maintaining the school from monies collected by the school board (Richards & Govere, 2003, p. 144).

The impact of chapter 233 and more specifically the introduction of school boards was that fewer African children were able to attend school and their schools were closed. This was due to their failure to pay the fees as demanded by the school board. Given the impact of the Land Apportionment Act which economically impoverished most Africans, it was no wonder that most parents could not afford the fees. What is even more poignant is that while African children were expected to pay fees, their European counterparts in the same schools were not, as European education was free and compulsory. Consequently, Chapter 233 reversed the gains of Chapter 97.

Richards & Govere thus conclude, *'[t]he primary purpose of Chapter 233 appears to be two-fold, first to put off as many African children from school as possible because it would not be possible for them to pay the fees, and secondly, to restrict the African teachers' academic freedom'* (2003, p. 145). At this time in the 70s the war of liberation was gathering momentum and schools were viewed as places of political emancipation and conscientisation. The colonial government was therefore wary of what was taking place in schools, particularly mission schools where most of the leaders of the armed struggle were educated.

5.2.7: 1973 Education Act.

The 1973 Education Act saw the further consolidation of education for European students. As Richards & Govere have argued, the act gave the Minister of education the power and authority to ‘

--establish, equip, and maintain European schools and secure the provision of a varied, comprehensive and constantly developing service for Euro- Rhodesians' (Richards & Govere, 2003, p. 145). Provision was also made for children with special educational needs and if necessary, these children could be educated outside Rhodesia. The act further widened the gap in educational provision between European and African students. As these changes were being implemented the war of liberation was intensifying and most of the schools in rural Rhodesia were being shut down, further reducing opportunities for African children as most of them lived in the rural areas (Richards & Govere, 2003; Kanyongo, 2005). Richards & Govere (2003) further alerts us to the reality that by 1978 at least 31% of African schools in rural Rhodesia had been closed. This reduction of educational provision for African students would bring serious challenges for the new government after independence.

5.3: Overview of the European Education policy.

Missionaries found it easy to spread their influence on Africans from the start and as such they set up mission schools which provided formal education for the Africans (Kanyongo, 2005). This might be explained by reference to the *Ubuntu* philosophy as discussed in chapter three. The colonial administrators on the other hand only provided education for European children and were always wary about the 'overeducation' of Africans as they did not want them challenging the supposed supremacy of the whites. However, the new exchange economy introduced by the colonial administrators and the increased need for economic productivity (after UDI) increased the demand for more educated Africans to provide the required labour. As this demand grew and African education by the missionaries expanded, the colonial government stepped in to control the provision of education and ensured that missionaries were not 'overeducating' (Kanyongo, 2005, Nherera, 2000). The idea of the 'overeducation' of Africans is a significant one in this thesis. What does it mean to say an individual has been 'overeducated'? Who decides the level of education that

another must acquire and what would be the benchmark for that decision? These and other such questions will be addressed in this thesis in our quest for *Ubuntu* social justice.

Atkinson (1972) rightly observes that the colonial government was critical of the type of education that the missionaries provided the Africans. Their view being that Africans should only be educated to the extent that they were sufficiently skilled in agriculture and industry to be able to provide the requisite labour. It was critical that Africans were not empowered to be able to compete with Europeans for better paying and managerial roles within the economy. A view also developed by Dorsey (1989). According to O'Callaghan and Austin, *'[a]fricans were to be given education but not equal to that given to whites. Industrial training in African schools was limited to elementary knowledge of agriculture, carpentry and building'*. (O'Callaghan and Austin, 1977, quoted in Kanyongo, 2005, p. 55). This mind-set by the colonial administration resulted in a 'two school system', an important development as it is at the heart of *Ubuntu* social justice education considerations that this thesis seeks to address.

5.4: The Two School System.

Prior to 1979 the education system in Rhodesia was divided into two distinct education systems segregated on racial lines. According to the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, (2001) the colonial administration introduced universal education for European children and spent 12 times more per primary pupil and 3 time more per secondary pupil in the 'European' system relative to what was spent on African children (Dorsey, 1989). Consequently, white children had better life chances than their black counterparts in every aspect of life. There was therefore a well-planned inequality agenda and education was being used to reproduce, perpetuate and sustain it. Once again, an important point to develop later in this thesis as we discuss what happened after independence.

An analysis of the African education system shows that it was voluntary and highly selective and whether a child proceeded to higher education depended on their ability to pass exams and their parents' ability to pay their fees. To the contrary European education was well funded by government, compulsory up to the age of 15 and non-selective. European children were guaranteed progression to higher levels if they wanted to proceed. As Dorsey succinctly sums it;

[t]he black system produced a broadly-based educational pyramid which pupils in secondary schools represented only 4 percent of pupils in the system, while in the white system the corresponding figure was 43 percent. Education for whites was compulsory to the age of 15. The white pupils, on the one hand, proceeded automatically to a comprehensive secondary school and, if sufficiently bright, was assured of going on to the sixth form (advanced high school) (Dorsey, 1989, p. 42).

Because of this highly selective, expensive and limited provision for secondary education, an educated elite emerged amongst the Africans. This elite group was then used by the system to further oppress the rest of the black people under the guise of meritocracy. We see this development more explicitly after independence when those who became the black elite took advantage of their privileged positions to reproduce the discriminatory education system inherited from the colonial regime. This is discussed in chapter nine.

As the demand for secondary education grew, the Rhodesian front administration decided to introduce educational reforms in 1966 (Dorsey, 1989). These reforms were still designed to control the type and quality of education that most African children received. The aim was always to ensure that there was no competition between blacks and whites. The reforms provided for a 10-year expansion plan which would see the establishment of 300 two-year junior secondary schools. Once again, the intention was to be seen in the curriculum offered in these junior secondary schools. The emphasis was on the acquisition of prevocational skills with 45% of the time spent in practical subjects (ibid). Again, the purpose was to create a pool of labourers for the industries and the agricultural sector. At this stage in the development of African education system there was a two-tier system. One which was highly selective and academic and another which focused on practical skills needed in industry, commerce and the agriculture sectors. Zvobgo, (1981); Dorsey, (1989);

Nherera, (2000) and Kanyongo, (2005) all agree that Africans were not happy with the direction of these educational reforms. While these reforms gave Africans the opportunity for secondary education, this was viewed as an inferior education that did not provide the graduates with the same status as those who attended the more academic system (Zvobgo, 1981; Kanyongo, 2005). Due to consumer resistance, the envisaged 'dynamic' expansion which would have seen the construction of 300 schools over ten years had failed as only 59 junior secondary schools had been built by 1976 (Zvobgo, 1981, 1986; Dorsey, 1989).

5.5: The 1979 Education Act.

With the liberation war intensifying and more black people joining the liberation struggle the Rhodesian front administration tried to divide the blacks by introducing reforms which addressed some of the areas of discontent, thus undermining the rationale for continuing with war. The 1978 internal settlement resulted in the formation of a coalition government comprising of internal political parties (Zvobgo, 1981; Mandaza, 1985). Compromises were reached on the contentious areas of, land distribution, voting rights, job opportunities and education. While all these other areas are worth discussing, I will maintain my focus on educational reforms. The 1979 education act saw the administrative integration of the 'European' and the 'African' education systems (Zvobgo, 1981; Dorsey, 1989; Richards & Govere, 2003). Dorsey, observes that;

[a]t an administrative level, the act provided for the integration of the "European" and "African" divisions of education and for the "gradual" racial integration of schools. Government schools were reclassified into group A schools (the former schools of the European division) and group B and group C schools (the former schools of the African division) (Dorsey, 1989, p. 43).

The material significance of the integration of the two systems was that, by law segregation had been removed and 'African' and 'European' children could now in principle be educated together and the restrictions had now been removed. The Act also introduced a differential fee-paying structure for each group of schools with the group 'A' schools paying high fees, group 'B' schools

paying low fees while group 'C' schools were free. These reforms were however meaningless in practice as attendance to schools was still restricted to zones. To limit the number of African children attending the group 'A' schools the Rhodesian front government insisted on strict zoning. African children could only attend group 'A' schools if their parents owned or leased a house in that zone. However, due to historic colonial residential patterns where blacks were not allowed to buy a house in the eastern suburbs (reserved for whites) it meant most black children could only attend group 'B' and 'C' schools as the group 'A' schools were in the eastern suburb.

Secondly, given that group 'A' schools were high fees paying schools, only a few African parents could afford the fees anyway. So, while the Act seemed a compromise to the old segregation policies, there was very little purchase for the Africans. Commenting on the zoning regulations, Chikombah posits that, *'[o]ne can only conclude that the stratification of schools into these groups and the zoning of Group A were determined more by political considerations which were discriminatory and ethnocentric in nature rather than by educational considerations'* (1981, p. 64). What is even more shocking about these regulations is that blacks working and living in the group 'A' zones (eastern suburbs) who did not own, or lease accommodation could not send their children to these schools. This was clearly targeted at blacks working as domestic workers or gardeners and living with their white employers, ensuring they could not send their children to the same schools as their employers. This resulted in these children having to travel to other zones for their schooling. This went against the very spirit of this regulation which was to reduce the amount of traveling that any child had to do, to get to their school.

The Act further provided for the establishment of a fourth type of schools, 'community' schools. A community of persons could buy from government a school and run it as a community school. The school would then be run by a board of governors in the interest of that community. It is interesting to note that with this provision more than a third of the primary and secondary schools from the former European system opted to become community schools. Again, the fee paid for these schools

to government was nominal. One can argue that the legislation was scandalous, as it striped government asserts and bestowed them to so-called communities, who would then perpetuate their elitist exclusivist attitudes. While it can be argued that these community schools were not allowed by law to be racially discriminatory in the enrolment of pupils, it is also the case that they could consider religious and cultural values as part of their enrolment criteria. Again, the ethos of each community school would be such that unless you belonged to that community you would not fit; hence you would be excluded on that basis. As would be expected, these community schools were 'bought' and run by whites to the exclusion of predominantly blacks, who did not have capacity, both financial and cultural capital to run these schools (Dorsey, 1989). In effect, community school were 'defacto' private schools. As blacks became affluent and moved into the eastern suburbs and were able to send their children to these schools, the boards of governors introduced high school levies which also limited blacks who could enrol.

One can further contend that the whites had no intention to see their children in an integrated system; they wanted to prolong the segregation as much as possible. It is equally poignant to recognise that, once it became clear that integration was inevitable, Europeans sought to preserve their segregated education system by developing private schools charging fees that were way beyond the reach of black families. The development of private schools became an alternative elitist model for excluding most African children from better quality education which would have made them competitive in higher education and the job market. Interestingly, we see this pattern emerging and being perpetuated by the affluent black elite after independence. We will discuss this later in this thesis.

5.6: Conclusion.

In this chapter, I have attempted to paint a picture of colonial education in Zimbabwe. This is not a detailed history of colonial education but rather a descriptive interpretation; an attempt at

contextualising the policy shift which we will be discussing in the next chapter. An understanding of the reality of Zimbabwe's education system since the arrival of the Europeans in 1890, should help us in our interpretations of the decisions taken at independence. A few key observations are necessary as concluding remarks. Firstly, it has been observed that the Europeans never had any intention of educating the Africans, other than as a means to an end. Africans needed to learn to read and write so they could speak English and be an asset in the European economic system. Secondly, Africans were educated by missionaries, who needed to convert them to Christianity and thus needed to 'Europeanise' them so that they could abandon their culture, preferring the more 'civilised' European culture and values. Thirdly, once the Rhodesian administration realised that Africans were being educated, they sought to regulate that education, ensuring that missionaries were not 'overeducating' them. It was thus important that a gulf remained between whites and blacks hence the two education systems, one for whites and another for blacks. Fourthly, as the economy grew particularly after UDI in 1965, there was greater demand for blacks to be educated to provide the skills needed in industry, commerce and agriculture. Fifthly, the Rhodesian administration responded to this demand by expanding the education system thus introducing what became known as the F2 schools (Dorsey, 1989). However, this was not the education that brought parity between blacks and whites as 'African' education was still voluntary, highly selective and underfunded while 'European' education was compulsory to the age of 15, academic and well-funded, giving white children opportunities to progress if they wanted, as long as they were smart enough.

Sixthly, while the 1979 Education Act provided for the legal framework for integration, it was never the administration's intent to bring *Ubuntu* social justice into the education system. As discussed above, segregation continued in another form with the development of community and or private schools. The zoning regulations ensured that blacks were kept in their place and whites continued to perpetuate racial elitism, but this time under 'legal' protection. It is this context that the EFA policy is

introduced to. In the next chapter, I outline the policy shift and the realities this was designed to address.

Chapter 6

Education for All Policy (EFA).

6.1: Introduction.

It is arguable that, in its simplest form, EFA speaks of the provision of basic education to all the citizens of a given country (Mavhunga *et al.* 2009). Given that what constitutes 'basic' education would vary from continent to continent and indeed from country to country; in this thesis and in the context of Zimbabwe, basic education refers to primary school level education (GOV, 1982). This is because it is at primary school that children are expected to gain functional literacy and numeracy that enable them to engage further with education at whatever level is relevant to their needs and context. The EFA policy as formalised in Zimbabwe in 1990 after the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) was the continuation of Universal Education for All introduced in 1980. Basic Universal Education is premised on the Declaration of Education as a Human Right by the UN in 1948.

So, from the dawn of independence in 1980, Zimbabwe's new government sought to address the inequalities inherited from the colonial education system. As such, any quest for social justice in Zimbabwe, particularly in education, needs to be understood from the colonial education policies that were designed to implement the logic of Western civilisation whose dark side is reflected in the policies discussed in the previous chapter. As already argued, the aim was always to ensure that Africans had no capacity to compete with their colonial masters in any sphere of life. As it is often argued, the implementation of this educational apartheid is one of the main reasons why the liberation struggle was waged against the colonial regime by the Africans (Richards & Govere, 2003). Maravanyika makes a succinct summation of the context of Zimbabwe at independence in 1980 when he writes;

--- Rhodesia was a country administered according to a dual-society philosophy, based on racial divisions, where "no African was expected to aspire to live in the manner of a European and vice-versa." Thus, the social, economic, political, and educational policies of Rhodesia were geared towards sustaining this dual-society philosophy (Maravanyika, 1990, p. 4).

It goes without saying therefore, that the new government policies should have aimed at redressing and dismantling this dual society. Government policy with regards to educational expansion is based on the premise that education is a fundamental human right as well as being basic to economic growth and the development of a socialist society (Zvobgo, 1981; Dorsey, 1989). In recognition of the above in Zimbabwe, as elsewhere in Africa, *'the advent of independence after prolonged colonial domination brought a vast expansion in the educational system paralleling a policy shift from an elite system of education to one of mass education'* (Dorsey, 1989, p. 40). This observation is attested to by both Jansen (1991) and Ansell (2003).

6.2: Context of Education in Zimbabwe in 1980.

Before outlining Zimbabwe's education policy introduced in 1980, it is imperative that I highlight the key issues that the policy reforms were meant to address. Firstly, the colonial education system had ensured that most black children were systematically excluded from the education system (Mungazi, 1985; Dzvimbo, 1991; Kanyongo, 2005). Andre Sheen a spokesperson for former colonial Prime Minister Ian Smith's ruling Rhodesia Front Party boastfully declared that *"... we in Rhodesia are determined to control the rate of African political advancement till time and education make it a safe possibility. We also wish to have the power to retard it"* (Sheen, 1973 quoted in Dzvimbo 1991, p. 79). This was an unequivocal declaration of the colonial government's policy position.

Secondly, Dzvimbo identifies three inhibitors to African children's access and progression in education during colonial Rhodesia and these are, *"--- the unavailability of school places, parental inability to pay user fees, and a series of selective terminal examinations which were designed to*

create severe school-progression bottlenecks for Black pupils” (Dzvimbo, 1991, p. 79). Dzvimbo’s

observation is substantiated by Riddle who notes that;

--- at least 25% of Rhodesia's Black school-aged children did not begin primary school due to the lack of school places. For those lucky few who reached seventh grade, 50% were excluded from proceeding to secondary education by the government's 1966 plan for Black education. This plan, which was based on a projected 50% wastage rate for primary school-leavers, allowed 37.5% of Black primary school graduates to proceed to a two-year, vocational junior secondary education. The remaining 12.5% were routed to a four-year, academic secondary education. By 1976, only 19% instead of the projected 50% of primary school-leavers found places in secondary schools. Of these, 11.4% went to vocational junior secondary schools and 7.6% to academic secondary schools (Riddle, 1980, p. 14).

These statistics paint a dire picture of education for African children in Rhodesia and arguably, it is such realities that drove and fuelled the war of liberation. Riddle further notes that ‘--- *education in colonial Rhodesia operated such that for every 1,000 Black school children, 250 never entered school, 337 completed primary school only, 60 attended secondary school, 37 reached Form IV (GCSEs), and fewer than 3 reached lower Form VI*’ (Riddle, 1980, p. 15).

Thirdly, the colonial government charged school fees for black children and yet education was free for Europeans (Richards & Govere, 2003; Mungazi, 2005). This situation was compounded by the Land Apportionment and Land Tenure Acts, 1930 and 1969 respectively, which had impoverished black people by taking away all productive land and pushing them into the less productive reserves (Richards & Govere, 2003). These policies meant that very few parents would have the capacity to pay the school fees even if they wanted their children to attend school.

In the 1970s, the establishment of African councils in rural areas, with the responsibility of taking over from missionary societies the financial responsibility for black education might have appeared to be an empowering move at face value but in reality, it was the colonial government’s strategy of controlling the demand for education by blacks. Responsibility without financial capacity meant that Africans could not complain about lack of educational provision now that they had been given the responsibility to oversee their schools. Again, a policy master stroke by the colonial administration.

African financial capacity had been decimated by the Land apportionment Act (Richards & Govere, 2003). Through the African Education Act 1959 Chapter 233 the colonial government also relinquished most of the responsibility in educating the African child including its responsibility for paying teachers' salaries. As the demand for more access and better quality of education increased, the colonial government responded by further underinvestment in Black education (Dzvimbo, 1991). As Dzvimbo poignantly observes, *'Between 1971 and 1977, government educational expenditures per pupil rose by \$16 and \$112 dollars for Black and White pupils, respectively. By the 1977-78 fiscal year the state was spending an average of \$491 for each non-Black pupil compared to \$45 for each Black pupil'* (Dzvimbo, 1991, p. 79).

However, the more the colonial government sought to exclude blacks from the education system, the more they became interested in attaining better education. Clearly, they had observed that the only route to higher social mobility for Africans was through better education. Africans were inspired by their black peers who had attained better education and the respect accorded them by the colonial government compared to the uneducated Africans (Banana, 1981). As Dzvimbo concludes,

[t]he frustration, anguish, and bitterness experienced by Blacks because of severely limited access to education made them even more resentful of the colonial government. Faced with such disparaging colonial policies and practices, Black Rhodesians were compelled to take up arms against the colonial government' (Dzvimbo, 1991, p. 79).

As the war of liberation intensified, most of the rural educational infrastructure was destroyed and thousands of young people opted to join the war and became refugees in neighbouring countries, Zambia, Botswana and Mozambique. So, by the end of the war in 1979 and the dawn of independence in 1980 there was an army of uneducated young people returning as refugees and adding to the already high demand for educational facilities in Zimbabwe, particularly in rural areas (Dzvimbo, 1991). Dzvimbo (1991) further observes that there were nearly two million returning refugees who needed to be educated in rural areas, yet the limited educational infrastructure had been decimated by the war. The EFA policy became the first step by the new government of

Zimbabwe to redress the imbalances inherited from the colonial regime. This saw an unprecedented educational expansion programme under the EFA policy shift implemented under the Transitional National Development Plan (1982/3).

6.3.1: Education for All Policy (EFA).

While Zimbabwe officially signed up to the International agenda for EFA in 1990 after the World Conference on Education for all (WCEFA), the implementation of some of the principles and goals agreed at this international conference started soon after independence in 1980 under the Transitional National Development Plan (TNDP). It is significant to note that the same international organisations that sponsored and hosted the Jomtein conference had already been working with the Zimbabwean government from 1980 (Maravanyika, 1990). As noted in the introduction, international organisations, amongst them SIDA, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank supported the Zimbabwean government from 1980 (ibid). It is this link between these international organisations, the government of Zimbabwe and the Jomtein conference in 1990 that explains the similarities between what was agreed at the WCEFA and the TNDP implemented in Zimbabwe in the early 1980s. An analysis of the TNDP shows that its seven implementation objectives are comparable to the six EFA goals agreed at the WCEFA (see appendices A & E).

It is a fact that between 1980 and 1990 these international organisations were already working with the Zimbabwean government influencing the policy decisions and implementations, in some cases providing funding (Maravanyika, 1990; Dzvimbo, 1991). As such it is logical to argue that the EFA policy in Zimbabwe did not start in 1990 but rather in 1980 but was only ratified after the Jomtein conference. The TNDP can be viewed as a pilot for the official EFA policy which came into effect in 1990. What is significant though is that in 1990 after Zimbabwe became signatory to the EFA agenda there was no change in educational policy direction, further indication that the implementation process had already started during the 1980s. It is within this spirit that the EFA policy is used and

analysed in this thesis. A reading and usage also used by Maravanyika (1990, 1991) and Dzvimbo, (1991).

Having addressed the seemingly contradictory usage (chronologically) of the EFA policy when applied to Zimbabwe in the 1980s it is important to acknowledge that education policy in Zimbabwe has always been a contested ground since the arrival of the Europeans in 1890. Before independence the contestations were between the colonial government, the missionaries and the Africans. From 1980 onwards, the contestations have been between the former colonial masters supported by international capital, the poor black African majority, the emerging black African professional middle class and the ruling elite. It is the emerging professional middle class that has been the driving force behind transforming the education system to provide for a more equitable educational provision (Dzvimbo, 1991). Divergent interests amongst the contesting groups meant that the more powerful and influential groups have always influenced the policy frameworks over the last century. The EFA policy was a welcome development for most black Zimbabweans at independence. This optimism was premised on the political rhetoric characteristic of all political speeches from all liberation movements since the late 1960s as they drummed up support for the war of liberation. It was common expectation that independence would usher in a new era providing access to that which the colonial regime had denied the Africans for 90 years of colonialism. The desire for a more socially just education system allowing access to educational provision for all, had been one of the rallying points on mobilising Africans to join the war of liberation as evidenced in the ZANU (PF) election manifesto (1980). What then is the EFA policy and how does it depart from the educational policies discussed in chapter five?

As discussed earlier, the EFA programme is not unique to Zimbabwe as it is an international education agenda hatched by the conceptual West and adopted and implemented in most so-called developing countries with different foci and to varying degrees of success (Rao, 2007). In this

chapter, I focus on the EFA policy as implemented in Zimbabwe in early 1980s after 90 years of colonial rule which saw the systematic marginalisation of Africans by their colonial masters. The broad aim of EFA is to provide quality education for all children regardless of race, colour, gender or any other barrier to educational access (Maravanyika, 1990). As such it is imperative that I outline the policy as implemented in Zimbabwe before analysing its impact on the education and development of the Zimbabwean child and the Zimbabwean economy.

At independence in 1980 Zimbabwe adopted a socialist ideology which was in sharp contrast to the capitalist ideology of the colonial period (Zvobgo, 1981; Mandaza, 1985; Maravanyika, 1990). It is this socialist ideology that informed the policy changes that the new government adopted. Given that Zimbabwe inherited a very strong capitalist infrastructure that had influenced people's perceptions of what is desirable, the policy shift must be understood in the context of this dichotomy. 90 years of colonial rule had reframed the Africans' mind-set in terms of the kind of education they desired for their children. The new government was bringing a new ideological shift informed by Marxist- Leninist philosophy and alien to most of the Zimbabwean population outside the political elite and those who had just returned from the armed struggle. This dichotomy became the foundation of the policy discussions and shift and thus foundational to the country's Transitional National Development Plan (Maravanyika, 1990). The contradictions posed by this dichotomy and the challenges thereof will be discussed in chapter seven.

Central to the EFA policy is the development and implementation of a Transitional National Development plan in 1982/3 (Maravanyika, 1990; Dzvimbo, 1991). This was a 5-year holistic approach to national development that linked the education sector with all the other sectors of the Zimbabwean economy. While I use the term policy with reference to EFA, it is important to note that this is a very loose usage of the concept. As observed by Corson (1986) the concept of policy particularly with reference to education tend to be confused with planning and or implementation.

In this thesis I concur with Maravanyika who has used the term policy to ‘--- *imply major guidelines for action which create frameworks that allow discretion and yet provide direction*’ (Maravanyika, 1990, p. 2). As such, I have found it more prudent to draw on a range of sources in mapping out the policy position and these are, the ZANU (PF) Election manifesto (1980, 1985); National Development Plans documents (1982/3); Minister of Education policy speeches between 1980 and 1986 and relevant print media articles covering the first seven years of Zimbabwe’s independence.

The rationale for such a selection of sources of information is due to, as already stated above, the new government’s Marxist- Leninist ideology not being in sync with the ordinary people’s expectations and as such the government tending to define their policies more loosely to give themselves room to manoeuvre to avoid a backlash with the masses. The people of Zimbabwe had experienced 90 years of colonial rule that had gradually initiated them into a capitalist economic model. It is safe to argue that for most of them, what they had fought for during the war of liberation was not a departure from the capitalist economic system but rather precisely what the whites had excluded them from (Dzvimbo, 1991). They wanted equality with, not departure from. This claim can be inferred from the masses’ rejection of a vocationalised and less academic curriculum, both after independence and during the late 1970s when the colonial regime tried to appease the Africans by offering to open more vocational schools but still denying them equality with white children (Maravanyika, 1990). It is this radical transformation to socialism that made it difficult for the new government to sell their vision to most of the people of Zimbabwe. Even within the nationalist group, while they propounded a Marxist- Leninist ideology some were sending their children to the elitist private schools formally reserved for whites (Jansen, 1991; Ansell, 2003). One can only conclude that as products of the colonial education system themselves, it is this education that they desired for their own children. It is these contradictions that tended to undermine the implementation of a transformative socialist education policy. Suffice it to say this would become their nemesis throughout their reign.

Commenting on the reasons why Black Africans engaged in a protracted war with their colonial masters Maravanyika (1990) makes an insightful observation. The generality of the black population argues Maravanyika;

--- fought for such issues as desegregation of residential areas, access to schools and hospitals, access to commercial land, goods and services hitherto reserved for Whites only, and a common desegregated franchise (1990, p. 13).

However, there were, amongst the blacks an elite nationalist political group whose interests included a total ideological transformation from capitalism to socialism. This was a step further than the majority who were more concerned about the goods and services they felt they were being denied by their colonial masters in their own country. In a nutshell, most blacks were fighting for equality and social justice for all (Maravanyika, 1990). This disparity between the ambitions and aspirations of the masses and those of the politicians was to become a major problem in the new government's attempts at policy change and implementation after independence. As argued earlier, even amongst the elite there was a lack of commitment and or lack of understanding as observed from the difference between their rhetoric and their actions. While they often spoke of ideological transformation some of their actions revealed a veiled desire for the radicalisation of the status quo as opposed to ideological transformation.

Equally important is to acknowledge that while political power was now in the hands of the Africans, economic power was still in the hands of Europeans and international capital. As part of the Lancaster House agreement that brought independence to Zimbabwe, private property was protected under the new constitution and the new government could not nationalise private property even if they wanted to (Lancaster House Agreement, 1979). This meant that the rhetoric behind an ideological transformation from a capitalist to a socialist economic system was mere mass rally talk without any mileage. While socially, the new government had repealed the socially segregating legislation, the legacy of the colonial regime was still entrenched. Social inequality was still evident in residential areas, in schools, hospitals and social amenities. While blacks could now

move and live in the areas formally reserved for whites, only those who could afford could do so, with the rest remaining where they had always been. A new elite black class began to join the whites and these were predominantly those in political power or who had connections in higher offices or those who were educated enough to get high paying jobs previously reserved for whites.

Economically, the repealing of those laws that had hitherto prevented blacks from engaging in commercial activities such as mining, agriculture, commerce and industry meant that blacks could now participate in all these aspects of the country's economic life. However, once again the economy remained in the hands of the Europeans. The constitution protected people's right to private property and as such whites retained all that they had including their privileged position. Independence only meant that blacks could now participate but they were still starting from their position of disadvantage. Only those who were already advantaged and had links with big businesses or had just returned from abroad with higher qualifications to compete with whites were able to fully participate in the new economy. The discriminatory laws had gone but blacks still faced the same former colonial masters they had been serving before the 18th of April 1980.

So, while the desegregation of residential areas, schools, hospitals and all the social amenities was something worth celebrating at independence, it only created a veneer of equality (Maravanyika, 1990) As Maravanyika further observes only those blacks who had the means could now fully participate in an independent Zimbabwe by moving to the former white suburbs, enrolling their children into former white schools, becoming members of former white only social clubs and going to former white only hospitals as this was where there was good quality services and yet equally far too expensive for the generality of the black population (ibid). This trend by those who could, to move into the former white areas and begin to enjoy the privileges that came with the move reflected the desires of the generality of the black population. This is a moot point that I will fully discuss in chapter seven. While the government continued with the rhetoric of a socialist state,

where the means of production were to be in the hands of the people, those with cynical vision could see that these were mere political talk shows. The reality was that for ordinary people the struggle had just begun. It is against this background that we see the EFA policy being introduced as part of the Transitional National Development Plan (1982/3) (Maravanyika, 1990).

6.3.2: The Transitional National Development Plan (TNDP).

In the Transitional National Development Plan Vol. 2 (1982/3) the government outlined its education policy (see appendix A). It unequivocally stated that;

Government recognizes that education is a basic human right. It also recognizes that education is an investment in human capital which sustains and accelerates the rate of economic growth and socio-economic development. The challenge for educational development in Zimbabwe is not only one of redressing the educational qualitative and quantitative imbalances in the inherited system but also that of meeting the exceedingly large new demands with limited resources (Transitional National Development Plan Vol. 2, 1982/3, p. 27).

As pointed out by Corson (1986) and echoed by Maravanyika (1990) the above policy statement offers a broad thrust in terms of the general direction that the new government was going to take. It offered ‘---*guidelines for action which create frameworks that allow discretion and yet provide direction*’ (Maravanyika, 1990 p. 2).

To fully understand the new government’s intent expressed in this guideline for action we need to look at the outlined objectives or even the implementation outlines. This is because it was always going to be impossible for the political rhetoric to be fully aliened to the implementation processes due to the colonial legacy left behind after 90 years of colonial rule. The social, economic and political infrastructure of the dual-society philosophy was so deeply embedded in every aspect of life that to radically transform it on the back of a policy enunciation was always going to be an impossibility. The challenges of the colonial legacies are fully discussed in chapter nine. The Transitional National Development Plan Vol. 2 (1982/3) set out 7 objectives of the education policy as follows;

Government will endeavour to attain the following broad objectives:

- a) develop curricula relevant to national socio-economic objectives, cultural ethos, intellectual and skill needs of Zimbabwe. To this end education will be linked closely to productive activities and manpower requirements of the Nation;
- b) provide good quality universal, primary education;
- c) within the fiscal constraints of a developing country, provide relevant secondary schooling to as many people as are required by the manpower needs of Zimbabwe's growing economy;
- d) provide adequate tertiary education at university and teachers training colleges;
- e) provide constant upgrading and supervision of teachers so as to improve the quality of teaching and learning;
- f) develop a strong non-formal education section which will enable those who were unable to pursue their education due to the policies of the past colonial administrations; and
- g) ensure that education is not only qualitatively improved but is as cost effective as possible so as to avoid the danger of the education service sectors depriving the productive and other sectors of essential investments (TNDP, 1982/3, p. 27).

As would have been expected the policy objectives were focused enough to offer the general thrust of the policy direction and yet open enough to allow for discretion on the part of government when it came to implementation and of course evaluation of success (see appendix 1 for details). These strategies will be the subject of chapter seven, where I will critically reflect on the policy with a focus on whether the policy and the strategies thereof reflect an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. For now, an outline of some of the outcomes of the policy implementation can help clarify the purposes and intended trajectory of the policy shift.

6.4: Outcomes of the EFA policy.

The policy shift had immediate quantitative successes in line with the two objectives which focused on the provision of universal primary education and expanding the provision of secondary education. A review of literature focussing on the impact of the EFA policy in Zimbabwe reveals a consensus on the positive quantitative impact of this policy shift (Maravanyika, 1990; Jansen, 1991; Nhundu, 1992; Chivore, 2002; Riddell, 2003; Ansell, 2003; Dzvimbo, 2005; Zvogbo, 2005; Kanyongo,

2005; Mubika & Bukaliya, 2011). Writing on the benefits and challenges of the EFA policy in Zimbabwe Mubika & Bukaliya (2011) point to the significant strides and positive results achieved in making the goals of the EFA policy a reality in Zimbabwe. They sum up some of these achievements by noting that;

[i]n the social arena, the government undertook massive and unprecedented expansion of education at both the primary and secondary school levels. In 1979, Zimbabwe had 2,401 primary schools with an enrolment of 819,586 pupils. By 1989, the country had 4,504 primary schools with an enrolment of 2,274,178 pupils. At the secondary school level, in 1979 there were 177 secondary schools with an enrolment of 66,215 pupils. By 1989, the country had 1,502 secondary schools with an enrolment of 695,882 pupils (Mubika & Bukaliya, 2011, p. 2).

Such statistics are corroborated by other scholars such as Maravanyika (1990), Chung (1989, 1995), Galabawa (2001) Chivore (2002) and Zvobgo (2005) amongst others. They all concur on the unprecedented expansion levels achieved in both primary and secondary education and the rise of literacy levels to 92% by 1995, amongst the best in a 'developing' country. These impressive quantitative figures are unparalleled anywhere in Africa and reflect 'successes' of the programme over the first 10 years of independence. However, beyond these mega quantitative achievements lies the key question of this thesis. To what extent has the EFA policy shift contributed to a more socially just education system?

6.5: Conclusion.

In this chapter it has been argued, firstly that the EFA policy is not unique to Zimbabwe. Instead it is an international initiative designed to help 'developing' countries in particular, to have more focused education policies with a clear agenda of trying to eradicate educational inequality. It is part of the West's post-colonial response to what Mignilo (2011) calls the darker side of western modernity. We have also observed that this policy shift in Zimbabwe was against the backdrop of what Maravanyika (1990) called a dual society policy introduced by the white minority government. Consequently, the socio-economic and cultural infrastructure had been designed to support this dual society. Thirdly, while the legal instruments could be repealed in 1980, the infrastructure behind it could not be

removed with the repeal of the law. Structurally, Zimbabwe was a divided nation in 1980 and any policy shift had to focus on a long-term reframing of every aspect of the country, from its physical infrastructure, its economic blueprint, its cultural orientations and indeed the aspirations of the people. We also observed however, that there seems to have been a dichotomy between the aspirations and views of those in political power and the masses (Dzvimbo, 1991).

It can be concluded that while the political elite were seeking transformation, the ordinary people sought social justice. The kind of social justice that was consistent with their understanding of what it means to live as '*abantu*'. The question then is whether the EFA policy, which the new government had moulded into The Transitional National Development Plan had capacity to deliver social justice that people had yearned for since the arrival of the colonialist in 1890. In the next chapter I focus on an analysis of the EFA policy through an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. The key question is, to what extent has the EFA policy shift contributed to a more socially just education system in Zimbabwe?

To answer this key question, it will be necessary to address other sub-questions that will shed more light to both the process and the outcomes of the EFA policy shift. Has the policy been fully implemented and to what effect? What have been some of the challenges in the implementation of the policy and why? Did the policy shift address the logic of coloniality responsible for the legacy of colonialism? Does the post-colonial socioeconomic and political infrastructure reflect an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice? These and other relevant questions are the subject of my reflections in Chapters seven, eight and nine. For now, suffice it to conclude that, given the colonial philosophy of a dual-society; the adoption of the EFA policy to address educational inequality and other socioeconomic and political ills would seem to have been a prudent move by the new government in 1980 and to anyone interested in social justice.

Chapter 7

Reflections on the EFA Policy through an *Ubuntu* Lens.

7.1: Introduction.

In this chapter, I reflect on the EFA policy in Zimbabwe through the lens of '*Ubuntu*'. An understanding of the concept of *Ubuntu* as discussed in depth in chapter three should help us evaluate this and other associated concepts, offering those who critique the arguments proffered, a basis upon which to evaluate the strengths and limitations of the expressed views. The concept of '*Ubuntu*' (Mbiti, 1969; Samkange & Samkange, 1980; Menkiti, 1983, 2004; Gyekye, 1993; Ramose, 2002, 2007; Murove, 2014; Mangena, 2012a, 2012b, 2015 2016;) posits a communitarian understanding of being. This is the view that collective identity defines individual identity and individual identities shape collective identity. The saying "I am because we are and we are because I am" captures the spirit of *Ubuntu* (Mbiti, 1969; Tutu, 1999 and Murove, 2014).

Having discussed the concept of *Ubuntu* in chapter three and an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice in chapter four, I want to begin by identifying a few theoretical frames that will be employed as interpretive reflective devices in this chapter. An *Ubuntu* theory of social justice has been defined in terms of three layers of interpretation. The three layers are; *Ubuntu* social justice as relational; *Ubuntu* social justice as respect for Self and Other and *Ubuntu* social justice as respect for Particularity, Individuality, Historicity and Belonging (Louw, 2001; Chilisa, 2012). These three layers of interpretation are used to structure my analysis of the EFA policy.

Apple (2008) has argued that Education is a site of struggle and compromise. Similarly, in this chapter I want to contend that social justice particularly in the field of education is characterised by struggles and compromise. While social justice in education has become a buzz word particularly in the conceptual West (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Florian, 2009; Zeichner, 2009), there are those who

argue to the contrary and would rather, social justice debates were kept outside the classroom (Smith, 2011). To the contrary, few would argue against the need for education to be a vehicle for social justice and for teachers to be agents of change (Freire, 1970, 1998; McLaren, 2007; Kincheloe, 2008; Giroux, 2012). Yet, what exactly these concepts mean and how teachers and all those working in the education sector are meant to achieve these, remains contestable. So, while there might be consensus about the value of social justice as one of the aims of education, it is difficult to find any common ground when it comes to what we mean by social justice or what this might mean in different cultures (Carr, 2003; Campbell, 2004).

In Zimbabwe, when the EFA policy was introduced in the 1980s, it seemed logical that it was needed given the historical injustices reminiscent of the colonial era. For the same reasons, the new government did not need to justify this policy shift, as to most Zimbabweans this was a long overdue policy change. After all, who would argue against the need to expand and open the education system to ensure that all children had access to basic education? Or, that those whose education had been disrupted by the war of liberation should be given opportunities to go back to school? Who would argue against the need to ensure adults who had been discriminated against by the colonial system should have access to adult education to improve literacy rates and upskill them for better participation in a new Zimbabwe? Who would dare argue against the need to ensure that girls and women, have opportunities and access to education given their experiences of the past? I want to posit that these were, by any standard, noble policy shifts and would bring excitement and hope to any society, particularly those coming out of a discrimination and exclusion as had been experienced by black Zimbabweans during the colonial period. It is poignant to observe at this point, that the assumed necessity of the policy shift and the absence of a critical justification, not only of the rationale but more importantly of the implementation, is what might have undermined an otherwise noble policy. I will return to this point in chapters nine and ten.

While issues of social justice in education (in the ‘developed world’) might be focusing on the educational outcomes of children from poor socioeconomic backgrounds and other marginalised groups relative to their more affluent and socially advantaged peers, in the ‘developing’ world, the focus might be on basic educational access notwithstanding the outcomes. Such contextual differences and possible cultural misunderstandings make it imperative that any meaningful discussion of social justice be built on a specific lens. In this chapter, I reflect on the EFA policy in Zimbabwe through the lens of ‘*Ubuntu*’. *Ubuntu* theory of social justice as relational; as respect for Self and Other and as respect for Particularity, Individuality, Historicity and Belonging (Louw, 2001; Chilisa, 2012; Molife, 2017) is used as the interpretive device in the next three sections.

7. 2: *Ubuntu* Social Justice as Relational.

In chapter four, I argued that *Ubuntu* theory of social justice is relational. This is a focus on the interconnectedness and interdependence of all things. This ontological, epistemological and axiological relationality means that *Ubuntu* theory of social justice is therefore about how interconnected and interdependent people relate not only to each other, but also to their environment and the spiritual world beyond them. As underscored in chapter four, central to an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice, is the position that a relational concept of social justice ceases to be an attribute/quality exhibited by *abantu* (persons) but rather it becomes part of what it means to be *umuntu* (person/human being). In this context social justice is a relational axiological concept. Considering a relational theory of social justice proffered in this thesis, how is this understanding of social justice reflected in the EFA policy as proclaimed and implemented in the Zimbabwean education system?

As I analyse the EFA policy through an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice it is imperative to acknowledge from the outset that the EFA policy was not developed and implemented as an *Ubuntu* response to the colonial injustices as outlined in chapter five. However, I have already observed that African

countries meeting at the OAU conference in Addis Ababa in 1963 agreed that postcolonial Africa should reverse the colonial legacies particularly in education (Nhundu, 1992). Given that the EFA policy is predicated on the principle of education as a human right, I argue here that there is a legitimate claim that in terms of its founding principles, the EFA policy in Zimbabwe is consistent with an *Ubuntu* informed theory of social justice. Herein lies the rationale. Why Education for all?

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical education and professional education shall be made generally available.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship amongst all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace (Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

Firstly, I want to contend that; The Universal declaration of Human Rights particularly article 26 quoted above is consistent with the idea of *Ubuntu* as a relational concept with social justice at the core of what it means to be human. Traditional *Ubuntu* education has always been a human right, free at all levels. Basic education was always compulsory as all children went through the same cultural initiation processes as part of what it meant for them to be human within a specific cultural context. All children would be educated to the level of being able to fully participate in all activities, socially, culturally, spiritually, economically and even politically. Education would not be separated from what it meant to be human as being human and becoming 'more fully' human was perceived as part of the natural process that all humans would go through. Education was therefore, for no other purpose than to allow all members of the community to fully participate in every aspect of community wellbeing. The attributes assigned to what it means to be fully developed as a human personality; (understanding, tolerance, friendship amongst nations and between races or religious groups and the pursuit for peace, captured under point 2 of article 26 quoted above) resonates with the concepts of interconnectedness and interdependence which are the hallmark of *Ubuntu* philosophy. Premised on Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) the Global

EFA programme and the EFA policy in Zimbabwe in the 1980s and 1990s offered what any proponent of *Ubuntu* would have agreed with.

Secondly, a relational concept of social justice demands that education, through the development of knowledge and understanding of the Self and the Other, draws people closer together rather than divide them on trivial differences as had been perpetuated by the colonial education system, as discussed in chapter five, so, the concept of EFA has this underpinning *Ubuntu* relational maxim. This is the idea that humanity finds its 'true' identity in communality rather than in our individuality (Chilisa, 2012). EFA would break the artificial colonial boundaries of our differences through the cultivation of knowledge and understanding of our interconnectedness and interdependence. As such, any education system that denies others access to that which makes us more human is by its very nature exclusivist and disqualifies itself from being socially just. A question can be asked, and rightly so; can education be education if it is not socially just? While this is a debate that lies beyond the scope of this thesis; it suffices to say from an *Ubuntu* perspective only education that is socially just qualifies as education. This is because social justice is not an attribute of education but rather central to what education qua education is. It is equally important to underscore the fact that this is a process of being, becoming and belonging. To be is to become, and to become socially just. As an individual become more and more educated, they should become more and more aware of the Self and the Other; the dependence and interdependence of this relational process is what puts social justice at the heart of education.

The idea that '[e]veryone has the right to education. ---'(Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948) speaks to the perennial debate on the 'I/We' dichotomy. It challenges the exclusivist worldview that separate people on race, social class, gender, sexuality, religion etc. and reintroduces the narrative of communality, interconnectedness and interdependence. By premising the EFA programme on an unqualified declaration on the rights of all human beings, this inclusivity is construed as a return to being human again. This is because from an *Ubuntu* perspective, to deny

another what you claim for yourself is in effect to deny their humanity; but to deny the humanity of another is to deny your own as the individual cannot be, without the other. '*I am because we are, and we are because I am*' (Samkanke & Samkange, 1980, p. 104). It follows from this argument, that there is a degree to which an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice underpins the EFA policy.

This, however, is by default rather than by design, as there is no direct reference to *Ubuntu* in any of the Zimbabwean policy documents. Be that as it may, it is important to recognise that reflecting on these observations as one centred on *Ubuntu*, the mere fact that there is no direct reference to the theory of *Ubuntu* does not mean *Ubuntu* philosophy is not present, as *abantu* can be nothing else other than *abantu* and as such what they do as *abantu* should always reflect what it means to be *umuntu*, whether they can articulate it or not. To do otherwise would be a contradiction and thus a negation of their being. Here I underscore the significance of seeing *Ubuntu* as a philosophy of being (Tutu, 1999; Ngcoya, 2009; Molefi, 2017a) rather than just an attribute exhibited by an individual (Gade, 2011).

Notwithstanding, it can still be argued that given that the EFA policy in Zimbabwe was partly designed to address some of the colonial historical imbalances, a return to *Ubuntu* would have been inevitable. As such, there was no need to directly reference *Ubuntu* philosophy, as this would have been the only socially just way to address the legacy of coloniality (the stratification of beingness). As this was a policy by *abantu* for *abantu*, *Ubuntu* would be the only guiding philosophy putting socially just education at the centre of becoming human once again. But is this portrayal of the underpinnings of the EFA policy reflected in how the policy was implemented and the impact this policy would have in making Zimbabwe's education system socially just? I will return to this question later, for now I want to continue to develop the argument for the possibility of an EFA policy reflecting an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice.

The third observation is that interconnectedness and interdependence are at the centre of this international initiative where international organisations such as UNESCO, UNDP, SIDA and the 155

countries that attended the Jomtien meeting (Rao, 2007) recognised that our sameness as human beings outweighs our differences. As such, the value and importance of education is not determined by one's race, colour, religion or nationality. Rather, it is centred on all of us being human (*abantu*). This observation flies in the face of the colonial education agenda of creating a dual society in Rhodesia discussed in chapter five. The colonial mind-set's desire and need to strictly differentiate between the colonised and the coloniser explains the colonial government's policies that deliberately excluded blacks from receiving the same education offered to whites. From an *Ubuntu* perspective, the colonial education system did not recognise blacks as humans (*abantu*). Instead they categorised blacks as subhuman and therefore lacking in epistemic virtue (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). If they did, it would have been impossible to justify the kind of education system developed in Rhodesia during colonial times. The gap in colonial reasoning is found in their lack of appreciation of the interdependence and interconnectedness between the self and other. By assuming that they could be, without the other and they could develop and become fully human to the exclusion of the blacks, colonialist negated their very claims to humanity. As such the colonial education system was socially unjust and thus completely devoid of *Ubuntu*.

7.3: *Ubuntu* Social Justice as respect for Self and Other.

The second conceptualisation of *Ubuntu* social justice is as respect for the Self and Other (Chilisa, 2012). Respect for the Self and the Other, is expressed in *Ubuntu* social justice through what Louw (2001) refers to as consensus building. What Mangena (2016, p. 68) call the 'dialogical and consensual' nature of *Ubuntu*. Consensus cannot be reached where there is no mutual respect. I want to contend once again that the WCEFA (Jomtien 1990) was a good example of how 155 countries came together in dialogue to try and find consensus in what would constitute EFA. The EFA achievement goals (see appendix E) can be viewed as the consensus that was reached at this meeting and these goals reflected what those who had sought consensus perceived as their common goals and purpose. What is significant here is that the meeting did not prescribe to each

country the details of how these goals would be achieved (Rao, 2007). Each country had to find its own unique and specific way of expressing these common goals. There was consensus in terms of the broad principles that would frame and shape the educational direction of travel for each country and yet there was respect for the specificity and uniqueness of each signatory to the EFA goals. By adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as foundational to the EFA programme, all signatories were signing to the rights of all, and to that end were committing to the maxim of respect for all. As Rao rightly observes;

[t]here is a growing consensus that human development must be at the core of any development process, that in times of economic adjustment and austerity, services for the poor have to be protected; that education, the empowerment of the individuals through the provision of learning is truly a human right and a social responsibility (Rao, 2007, p. 3).

In this respect, putting people at the centre of the educational agenda resonates with the idea of the philosophy of *Ubuntu* discussed in chapter three and *Ubuntu* theory of social justice discussed in chapter four. Rao, further observes that; *'In fact education is a prerequisite not only for the full exercise of the individual's rights, but also for the understanding and respecting the right of others'* (Rao, 2007, p. 2) Once again, it is evident that an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice can be extrapolated from the foundational underpinnings of the EFA policy. An *Ubuntu* worldview advocates for the protection and safeguarding of the rights of the vulnerable in any society (Tutu, 1999). Education on the other hand empowers and enable the vulnerable to have capacity not only to identify oppressive and unjust systems, but also gives them a voice in fighting against social injustice. Desmond Tutu makes a poignant point when he posits that;

--- I am human therefore I belong. I participate, I share. A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than they are (Tutu, 1999, p. 33).

It is in this reading of the concept of social justice in *Ubuntu* philosophy that brings together the Self and the Other. A socially just education system would therefore put more emphasis on removing or blurring the boundaries between the Self and the Other and help the community value their

interdependence and interconnectedness more than their individuality, whilst at the same time not crushing the individual but cultivating their capacity to value and see their contribution to collective good. As Mangena (2016) rightly argues, the Common Moral Position (CMP) is the moral imperative for *Ubuntu* ethics.

Unfortunately, this is one area where the EFA policy, when critically analysed fails to make post-colonial education in Zimbabwe more socially just. While the foundations based on education as a human right resonates with *Ubuntu* theory of social justice, the new government of Zimbabwe did not necessarily reform the curriculum at independence (Jansen, 1991; Nziramasanga, 1999; Ansell, 2003; Kanyongo, 2005). The same colonial curriculum was rolled out to all children. As such, the aims of education as espoused by the colonial regime were retained and thus an opportunity to introduce a more socially just system of education was missed. This line of reasoning will be developed further in chapters nine and ten. What is clear however, is that while opportunities were created for a more socially just system informed and consistent with *Ubuntu* philosophy, maybe the lack of economic capacity and ideological will, accounts for these missed opportunities. It can also be argued that the failure of the government to dismantle the socio-economic and political structures of the colonial regime became a barrier to developing a socially just education system through the EFA policy shift (Dzvimbo, 1991). As Patel (2016, p. 7) would argue; *'[s]ettler colonialism's fulcrum is the land; coloniality more broadly is about the stratification of beingness to serve accumulation of material and land'*. As such the retention of the colonial stratified infrastructure undermined the policy implementation from the outset.

7.4: *Ubuntu* Social Justice as respect for Particularity, Individuality, Historicity and Belonging.

Finally, the third conceptualisation of *Ubuntu* social justice is expressed as a respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging. While these four concepts are presented here separately, when analysed within the context of *Ubuntu* philosophy they are intricately intertwined. For

expediency, I will discuss them separately to allow us the opportunity to look at examples from the EFA policy that would reflect their practical application. As Chilisa (2012) would make us believe, without the respect for particularity, individuality and historicity *Ubuntu* as a communitarian concept collapses. In other words what makes social justice core to *Ubuntu* philosophy is the essence of these four concepts. How then is social justice expressed in these concepts reflected in the EFA policy in Zimbabwe?

7.4.1: Particularity.

Respect for particularity is intricately linked to individuality. As such, I will only analyse the EFA policy in its respect for particularity under section 7.4.2 in order to bring these two concepts together. Particularity as already discussed in chapter three relates to the idea that all human beings are unique, and that uniqueness is what makes them distinctive. *Ubuntu* philosophy demands that what is particular about an individual is what they bring to the table of communality and collective identity. Without this particularity a person would not make a difference to group identity and therefore would be irrelevant to what that community is. In explaining the meaning of the maxim, “*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*”, Wiredu (1995) posits that, to be human implies the otherness of other people while the otherness of others also implies your particularity. It follows therefore, that to respect the particularity of others confirms your own particularity and denying the particularity of others is tantamount to denying one’s own. If as argued above, education is a human right, it follows that it must be the right of all and to the same degree. Denying other people, the kind and quality of education you provide for yourself is therefore a contradiction to the principle of human rights. It can be observed that this was one of the challenges faced by the colonial education system in Rhodesia (Dorsey, 1989). While the colonial administration continued to provide education for white children, they denied this right to the blacks. This according to *Ubuntu* is an untenable position that fully demonstrates the lack of respect for the particularity of the black people while claiming theirs.

As argued earlier the colonial regime could only justify their policy by categorising black people as subhuman and therefore lacking in ontological and epistemological human status. It is this contradiction both philosophically and normatively that meant the colonial education system was unjust. While the colonial mind-set clearly valued the rights of the white children to a good education, they were not prepared to extend the same rights to the colonised's children, as espoused in the 1930 Compulsory Education Act (Dorsey, 1989; Richards and Govere, 2003). This point is well developed in chapter five. An *Ubuntu* theory of social justice is built on the idea that it finds its fullness when particularity of self is recognised and respected by the other as the other's particularity shapes and frames my particularity in a relational way. The analysis of the EFA policy considering particularity is addressed in section 7.4.2, which focusses on individuality, because of the way particularity and individuality are intertwined as discussed fully in chapter three.

Another example of particularity can be exemplified in how the education system deals with those children with specific and or special educational needs. To what extent do these particularities inform how school provision is organised and their needs met? Any education system that does not address these particularities cannot claim to be addressing social justice issues as this means that there is no respect for particularity in that context. Alternatively, it might mean that while other people's particularities are identified and respected the same is not true of all. By definition this would be discrimination based on whether what an individual offer to our otherness is deemed to be desirable or not. This means that education as a human right is denied to people based on who they are and what they can or cannot contribute to our communality.

Ubuntu demands that the contribution of the individual to the group is not determined by the group but by the individual. This is what respect for particularity also entails. If the value of the individual is determined by the group, then those who are 'weak' within the group are then marginalised and subjected to discriminatory tendencies as the dominant within the group usurp the agency of those they deem to be 'weaker' members of the group. Such lines of reasoning are responsible for

developing socially unjust 'education' systems; where others see themselves as having the right to decide for others and impose their agency on others. In doing so, the particularity of others is subverted, and social injustice perpetuated. Respect for particularity in a socially just education system is a safeguard for the rights of all humans to an education that allows them to fully develop and bring their particularity to bare in the otherness of and particularities of the group. This is what it means to say; there is no 'I' in 'we', yet there is no 'we' without the 'I'.

An analysis of Zimbabwe's Transitional National Development Plan Vol. 2 (1982/3), where the government outlined its education policy, reveals that the government unequivocally stated that; *'Government recognizes that education is a basic human right. It also recognizes that education is an investment in human capital which sustains and accelerates the rate of economic growth and socio-economic development'* (1982/3, p. 27). I have already argued that accepting the principle of education as a human right resonates with an *Ubuntu* concept of social justice. This is because social justice is not a quality attributable to an individual; rather it is integral to what it means to be *umuntu*, as one cannot be socially just in isolation. This is a relational concept that reflects the ontological, epistemological and axiological quality of that relationship. In the same way human rights are integral to what it means to be human and by the same token integral to an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. The question is whether this is reflected in the set goals and the subsequent implementation of the policy. It is in the EFA goals that we see some evidence of this concept addressed, though in an indirect way. I will discuss this analysis in the next section for reasons suggested above.

7.4.2: Individuality.

Respect for individuality is intertwined to respect for particularity. I have already argued in chapter three that the concept of individuality in *Ubuntu* is not an exclusivist concept, but rather, linked to the idea of otherness. *Ubuntu* understanding of individuality involves the recognition of otherness in

defining the individual. If 'I am' because 'we are', it follows that my individuality is entwined with otherness. To try to extricate the individual from their otherness, is to, by the same token deny their individuality. It follows then that respect for individuality, means respect for otherness. How is this reflected in the EFA policy as espoused and implemented in Zimbabwe?

As with the concept of respect for particularity discussed above, respect for individuality is captured within the foundations of the EFA policy with its anchoring on the declaration of education as a human right. Particularity and individuality are protected and thus respected within those foundations. What is critical is the recognition that within an *Ubuntu* worldview this conceptualisation has its agency in time, space and context (Wiredu, 1965; Shutte, 1993; Louw, 2001, Mangena, 2012b). One can add here, that context refers to socio-cultural, economic and indeed political context. This is a recognition that *Ubuntu* respect for individuality is a dynamic understanding of reality; allowing the same levels of dynamism in the education system. A socially just education system is therefore not fixed in time, space and history but rather is a time, spacial and historically sensitive concept. Since individuals can only 'truly' exist in relationships, it follows that an education system that is socially just must reflect this mutuality, conceptually and normatively. While foundationally, it is arguable that the EFA policy is built on seemingly socially just foundations, the details of how it was implemented in Zimbabwe raises questions to the respect for both particularity and individuality. This is because an analysis of the achievement goals identifies several gaps in terms of how these goals were designed to address respect for both particularity and individuality.

Firstly, how does the policy address issues of time, space and context? The fact that the policy adopted the broad and generic principles from the Global EFA movement (Rao, 2007) meant that the policy remained less specific in terms of how it would address the time, space and context specific needs of the Zimbabwean situation. A pertinent question is whether signing up to the Global EFA movement as represented by the Jomtien meeting in Thailand in March 1990 made any

difference in the way Zimbabwe would have proceeded with her education policies. Was this a significant policy development or was it just a convenient alignment given the financial and multilateral technical and financial support available through these international organisations? A detailed analysis shows that it may have been both. The Jomtien meeting in March 5 to 9, 1990 came 10 years after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. As such the new Government had already implemented their initial post-independence education policies. For instance, the expansion of the education system to have universal education at primary level and the expansion of the secondary schools took place between 1980 and 1985, which was before the Jomtien meeting. In this way the meeting in 1990 was more of an endorsement of what the new government in Zimbabwe was already doing. In this light one can argue that at one level, the motivation for these policy changes were informed more by the desire for a socially just education system underpinned by *Ubuntu* philosophy than the influence of the Global EFA movement. The Education policy in Zimbabwe in 1980 was driven by the desire to address and mitigate the long years of a discriminatory colonial education (Dzvimbo, 1991). However, a more cynical critique would be that these policy changes had already been influenced by the same international organisations who had, since 1980, worked and supported the Zimbabwe government.

7.4.3: Historicity.

In chapter three, I developed the argument on the historicity of *Ubuntu* as a philosophy. Two main contesting arguments were proffered. Firstly, the argument that *Ubuntu* philosophy is historically inauthentic, as it is a narrative of return by those academics and politicians who wish to rally people to this utopian era for personal political gains (van Binsburgern, 2001; Matolino and Kwindigwi, 2013). The second, represented by most African scholars (Mbiti, 1969; Samkange & Samkange, 1980; Ramose, 2012; Chilisa, 2012; Mangena, 2012a, 2016) who argued that *Ubuntu* is an authentic historical philosophy in existence throughout Southern Africa in pre-colonial times. My conclusion was a synthesis of these two positions; where I argued that while *Ubuntu* is a historically authentic

philosophy, it cannot be simply a narrative of return as the time, space and context have now changed and it would be impossible to return even if we wanted to. I therefore suggested identifying those principles that would constitute what it means to be *Umntu* (Human being) and use these as our point of departure in trying to understand what *Ubuntu* would mean in the current time, space and context. It is in this understanding that I think the EFA policy reflects *Ubuntu* philosophy at foundational level.

As with respect for particularity and individuality, respect for historicity is pronounced in the declaration of education as a human right. This is particularly significant in the sense that by making education a social justice issue, the EFA policy put social justice at the centre of education. In other words, social justice is not an attribute of a particular way of educating citizens but rather it is what makes education a worthwhile socially just activity. For an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice, this is very significant as I have argued in chapter four, that social justice is at the centre of what it means to be human and as such key to what it means to have a socially just education system. Implied in this argument is the inseparability of education and social justice and in turn, of *Ubuntu* from social justice. If this argument is logically valid and sound, it follows that one can draw the conclusion that the EFA policy reflects elements of *Ubuntu* philosophy particularly given the social justice foundations drawn from the Human rights declarations (1948) which later underpinned the Jomtien meeting in 1990.

7.4.4: Belonging.

The concept of belonging is central to *Ubuntu* conceptualisation of being and therefore social justice. It is what predicates the idea of interdependence as discussed in chapter three and four. One cannot be, without belonging, as to be is also to belong (Mbiti, 1969; Gyekye, 1997; Chilisa, 2012; Molefe, 2017a). In pre-colonial Africa, belonging defined one's identity, as where one belonged would be even more important than who they were as an individual. Typically, every adult Zimbabwean is

known by their family name or totem than their first name. This is not just a preference but rather, *Ubuntu* praxis. Writing on the meaning of *Ubuntu* in pre-colonial Africa, Praeg (2014) agrees with Chabal (2009) who contended that being can be understood through the concepts of origin, identity and locality. It is these three concepts that define belonging. Explaining the idea of belonging Praeg (2014) emphasises the importance attached to geographical origins, the link between the place of origin and the place of burial and indeed the tribal links. Chabal (2009, p. 27) succinctly sums it up when he concludes by claiming that origin is also 'a maker of community'. As Chilisa (2012) observes, this relational ontology speaks of the interconnectedness between every aspect of life including the land, the living, the living dead (spiritual dimension) and the belief systems upon which the ethical and social value systems are predicated. It is this sense of being and belonging that Praeg (2014, p. 42) sums up as the 'political economy of obligations'.

In describing and explaining the idea of obligations within the *Ubuntu* philosophy he observes that;

[t]o have no obligation is not to belong; it is not to be fully and socially human. Obligations, therefore, are not seen – as the western concept seems to imply – as impositions, claims on one's otherwise better used time and energy, but as a means of sustaining one's place in a network of belonging (Praeg, 2014, p. 42).

This is a very important observation when trying to understand *Ubuntu* theory of social justice particularly when trying to resolve the tension between the individual and the community, individual rights and the common good. The debate between Menkiti (1984, 2004) and Gyekye, (1997) referenced in chapters three and four is precisely on this tension. While Gyekye (1997) advocated for ascribing equal status between the individual rights and common goods, Menkiti (1984, 2004) contends that social duties or obligations have priority over individual rights. This position is predicated on the understanding that being, becoming and belonging are central to the concept of *Ubuntu* and therefore of *Ubuntu* social justice.

My position is that while the idea of a self, constituted of both sociality and autonomy in equal measure and standing, is attractive to those sold to the idea of individual rights, it leads to both

philosophical and practical conundrum. What happens for instance, when the interests of the individual and those of the community are in conflict? On this basic principle of belonging, *Ubuntu* would proffer that sociality would take precedence. This is what it means in praxis, to say in belonging, the individual seeds their rights in the understanding that the community will always act in the best interest of everyone who belongs, a view well developed by Molefe (2017).

Throughout this chapter I have consistently argued that the EFA policy is predicated on the idea that education is a human right and therefore foundationally consistent with an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. Crucially however, when analysing the implications of the idea of belonging when applied to both *Ubuntu* philosophy and an *Ubuntu* informed theory of social justice a tension emerges. This is the tension discussed above, focusing on what takes precedence individual rights or the common good? We have already observed in the debate between Menkiti (1984, 2004) and Gyekye (1992) that a theory of social justice based on individual rights having precedence over the common good is inconsistent with an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. As Menkiti (1984), Wiredu (2008), Molefe (2017), amongst others would concur, *Ubuntu* social justice particularly after its violent encounter and disruption by colonialism would still uphold communalism without trampling on individual rights. This however means that when the needs of the individual conflict with the common good, the common good would take precedence.

The problem with the EFA policy as implemented in Zimbabwe is that it gives precedence to individual rights as enshrined in the constitution. This unfortunately undermines *Ubuntu* theory of social justice and helps perpetuate the colonial violence against the disadvantaged in Zimbabwe. The problem with an individual right informed theory of social justice particularly when applied to *abantu* is that, we gain more of our individuality at the expense of our belongingness and this is pernicious to *Ubuntu* theory of social justice adopted as the interpretive device in this thesis. It is this violence against *Ubuntu* that has continued to undermine the post-colonial education system in Zimbabwe.

7. 5: Conclusion.

Thus far I have demonstrated that by making Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (1948) as its foundation; it is arguable that the EFA policy has its foundations in developing a socially just education system in Zimbabwe. I have also argued that social justice is at the centre of an *Ubuntu* philosophy. This is understanding social justice as a relational concept focusing on how humans as relational beings, either relate in a socially just or unjust manner. Education as the worthwhile activities that initiate human beings into these socially just relationships is therefore at the heart of *Ubuntu* philosophy. What remains questionable is whether the EFA policy in Zimbabwe when analysed from an *Ubuntu* perspective makes the education system socially just. In the next chapter, I focus on analysing the extent to which the EFA policy could be seen as socially just when analysed through *Ubuntu* philosophy.

Chapter 8

Zimbabwe's Education for All goals and *Ubuntu* Social Justice.

8.1: Introduction.

The main goal of this research is to critique and interpret the EFA policy in light of its social justice agenda. This critique is done using an *Ubuntu* lens, thereby giving the process an indigenous approach. In this chapter, I have adopted the educational goals set out in the Zimbabwe Transitional National Development Plan Vol. 2 (1982/3) as my framework for analysis (see appendix A). Each of the seven development goals offer a specific focus of the education policy and are also linked to the EFA goals as outlined in the review documents (Maravanyika, 1990). Each goal will therefore be analysed considering its social justice focus as defined in *Ubuntu* theory of social justice discussed in chapter four.

One sector where the post-independence government of Zimbabwe can claim 'success' in, is the education sector. While there might be contestations with regards to the quality of this success as will be seen in this chapter, the first decade saw unparalleled expansion, with '*--- basic education accessible through policies of free education, compulsory education and upholding children's right to education*' (Kanyongo, 2005, p. 69). According to the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) report December (1990);

Post-Independence systems in education and training conform mainly to ZANU (PF)'S election manifestos of 1980 and 1985. The main orientations of these reforms have been guided by the following policy principles: (1) decolonization of the system; (2) abolition of the social structures; (3) democratization of access to education; (4) localization of curriculum and examinations; (5) vocationalization of the secondary school curriculum; (6) promotion of socialism; and (7) promotion of social transformation (SIDA, December 1990, p. 5).

Swedish support to the education sector in Zimbabwe started soon after independence in 1980 and the report referred to above, was a product of the review of the performance of the formal and non-

formal education during the first five years of the plan (Maravanyika, 1990). From this report it is evident that foundationally, the EFA policy was developed with a clear intent of making Zimbabwe's education system socially just. This, as argued above, is drawn from the fact that the basis for the policy is a recognition that education is a human right. It has also been argued that the idea of education as a human right is consistent with a relational conception of social justice. This however must be understood in the context of individual rights having no precedence over the common good (Molefe, 2017). Again, it is the relationality, dialogicality and consensuality of these rights that makes for social justice in an *Ubuntu* context. In this light, and at a foundational level, the EFA policy as was developed and pronounced can lead to the conclusion that social justice is at the centre of the EFA policy even when argued or analysed from an *Ubuntu* lens. However, points of contestation emerge when we look at the details of how the Zimbabwean government implemented the policy, particularly when reviewing the goals under Zimbabwe's Transitional National Development Plan Vol. 2 (1982/3).

8.2. 1: Develop curricula relevant to the national socio-economic objectives, cultural ethos and intellectual skill needs of Zimbabwe.

We should remind ourselves that colonial education in Rhodesia had been primarily developed to meet the needs of the colonial masters. As such, the curriculum was Eurocentric in every respect (Ansell, 2003). African knowledge systems were rejected as of no value and the colonial curriculum was modelled on the British education system (Maravanyika, 1990). Even the examinations were overseen by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES) until the year 2000 (Ansell, 2003). The curriculum was therefore designed to meet the needs of the new exchange economy introduced by the settlers. As this economy grew, there was increased demand for this European education amongst the Africans; leading to the complete devaluation and hence destruction of traditional education systems (Dorsey, 1999). While the new Zimbabwean government could pride itself with opening educational access and making education a human right,

the question is what kind of education was it? To what extent could this be a move towards '*Bantu*' education?

By and large, the curriculum at independence did not change significantly. In fact, the government maintained a two-tier education system modelled along the same lines borrowed from the colonial system. Those who were deemed to be academically gifted were offered an academic curriculum (F1) which had been the preserve of European children in colonial times. This was an academic path leading to university education for those who succeeded with their 'A' level examinations. Just as was the case during the colonial era, the graduates of this system would be the professional elite who were earmarked for leadership and management roles within the white-collar job market (Dorsey, 1989, 1996; Ansell, 2003). Those seen as less academic, were offered the (F2) curriculum; which offered a combination of academic and technical/commercial subjects. Graduates from this curriculum pathway were being developed for industries through the apprenticeship and technical colleges training system (Peresuh & Ndawi, 1998). The colonial regime had tried to implement this two-tier system in 1966 under the 'New Education Plan' (Zvobgo, 1986). Under this plan the most able 12.5% of African children completing primary education each year were put through an academic programme (F1), while the next 37.5% were put through the (F2) system which offered basic vocational skills (Zvobgo, 1986). This system had met resistance, partly because it would apply only to black students, and only 21 of the 300 planned schools were operating by 1971 (Zvobgo, 1986).

It was therefore not surprising that the post-colonial curriculum faced the same resistance from students and parents as there was very little difference in 'real' terms. The only meaningful difference was that the academic curriculum that had been predominantly reserved for Europeans was now 'open for all'. Discrimination on racial grounds was replaced by discrimination on class and academic aptitude. As a product of this system, I do remember being told what subjects I would be taking for my 'O' level exams. There was no consultation or any choice as to what my interests were.

However, with the F2 schools having already been rejected by the people of Zimbabwe during the colonial era, the new government had to find a different way to provide the vocational skills as it was clear that the F1 curriculum could not be sustained by the labour market, more so, with the expansion of the education system. So, the 'Education with Production' (EWP) was designed to combine the academic and practical as espoused in Freire's (1972) ideas about the dialectic of knowledge and practice. This was also in sync with the Marxist ideology of polytechnic education (Ansell, 2003).

Just like with the F2 system, the government policy to vocationalise the curriculum and also introduce the Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production Schools (ZIMFEP) established in 1980, to introduce technical education in the schools was only implemented in the former African schools (Group 'B' and 'C'). Former group 'A' (white schools) and the private schools where children of the elite attended, continued to prepare students for university entrance (Zvobgo, 1986; Dzvimbo, 1991). Reflecting on the above through *Ubuntu* lens shows that there was complete disregard for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging; key elements of *Ubuntu* theory of social justice as observed in chapter four. For instance, to continue to discriminate on grounds of economic power as was the case during the colonial era shows that the new government had total disregard for historicity. Such an inconsistent attempt at policy implantation reflected colonial trappings where children were 'educated' to become farm labours hence both children and their parents resisted the initiative. It is thus clear that there was lack of political will to make the education system an education for all, with social justice principles at its core.

As Maravanyika observes in his report to UNESCO, '*--- a particular problem is the preference of students and parents for a traditional, academic education of the sort often denied Blacks under colonial rule over the new, more practical and vocational curriculum*' (Maravanyika, 1990, p. 9). This preference of an academic curriculum by students and their parents is the outcome of what Dzvimbo (1991) calls the passive revolution discussed in chapter nine. In its effort to develop a

relevant curriculum, in line with the National Development Plan goals, the government through the EFA policy failed to depart from the colonial education curriculum and therefore failed to make the education system more socially just as defined by *Ubuntu* philosophy. This position is also attested to by the Ndziramasanga CIET (1999) which concluded that Zimbabwe's curriculum was not relevant to the needs of the country and therefore needed to be reformed. Without a reformed curriculum, allowing for the restoration of indigenous knowledge systems, the implementation of the EFA policy failed to return to *Ubuntu* education and as such remained steeped in coloniality and therefore unjust. While the curriculum might have remained relevant to the economic interests of a market economy, it also remained culturally decentred and therefore irrelevant to an *Ubuntu* informed socially just education system.

8.2.2: Provide good quality universal, primary education.

The stated education policy in 1981 was the Growth with Equity (1981) (see appendix B) with an objective of dismantling the colonial discriminatory system and creating a non-discriminatory egalitarian society. This policy was based on the ZANU [PF] (1980) (see appendix C) election manifesto. The policy was in stark contrast to that of the colonial period which was aimed at creating a dual society as discussed in chapter five. Reviews on this policy shift by SIDA (1990), The World Bank (1990) and UNESCO (2003/4) show that this policy was very effective as seen in the massive expansion in primary education in the first five years of Zimbabwe's independence. Another significant policy shift was the gender neutrality of the post-independence policies. This was significant as it ensured that there was no discrimination and facilitated for every child in independent Zimbabwe to access primary education (Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) 1983). Equality of educational opportunity was perceived in terms of equality of access. This meant that girls, who had suffered the most under the colonial regime could now have the same opportunities as boys. It is equally important to observe that primary education was free at all government and council schools throughout the country (GOZ, 1983). As observed above the government policy on

education reflected the perception of education as a human right (Rao, 2007). Through this policy initiative, the government embarked on an impressive programme of expansion that saw primary enrolment figures increase 300% by 2002 (GOZ, 2003). The government saw this as a means by which racial inequalities could be redressed in the quickest possible time.

The important question for this thesis is whether these developments reflect any *Ubuntu* theory of social justice? As has already been argued, while there is no direct reference to *Ubuntu*, this goal is consistent with an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. The opening of the education system and giving access to all children and the removal of the fees barrier ensured that all children could have access to education. While the government was aware of the gender gap between boys and girls, by adopting a gender-neutral policy the government demonstrated respect for the cultural sensitivities and attitudes with regards to the education of girls. The removal of the barriers meant that parents could be encouraged to send children to school without imposing the same dictatorial tendencies of the colonial government. This could be seen as respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging; critical principles of an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. It is not surprising that by the early 1990s primary enrolments of 9- 12-year olds stood at 94% (GOZ, 1995; UNICEF, 1996). This again can be interpreted as government reaching consensus with parents on the importance of the education of all children regardless of gender, race or geographical location.

While primary education was 'free', there were other costs that were to be borne by parents such as, general purpose fees, sports fees and parent contributing to the building of the schools by providing labour and time (UNICEF, 1996). The involvement of the communities in the education of their children was important from an *Ubuntu* perspective as excluding parent altogether would have meant the government has devalued their role and thus parents would not see the value of education and as such would not send their children to school. *Ubuntu* advocates a communalistic approach to all aspects of life including the raising of children of which education is part. As was always the case in traditional *Bantu* communities, everyone has a contribution to make to the

education and development of their children and as such to exclude the parents would have been contrary to *Ubuntu* philosophy. As noted earlier, the absence of a direct reference to *Ubuntu* is neither here nor there, it is the principles that can be drawn from this policy shift and how communities reacted to these policy shifts that matter in this analysis.

8.2.3: Provide relevant secondary schooling to as many people as are required by the manpower needs of the economy.

Developments in the secondary sector were no different from those in the primary sector in the first decade of Zimbabwe's independence. As more primary school graduates came through the system, the government had to provide secondary places for them. Given the bottle neck created by the colonial regime observed in chapter five, there were obviously more challenges in secondary education than there were in primary education. A massive enrolment of secondary pupils had to be provided for; with the number of secondary schools rising from 197 in 1980 to 1535 by 1995 (Codes and Allocations, 1980-1996, Ministry of Education, Harare). In 1980, the budget allocation to education stood at 18.1 % of the national budget, one of the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa (ibid). Such a commitment to the education of the nation reflects the underlying commitment to education, perceived as a human right and a recognition of human capital linked to economic development. Statistical details of how this was done, achieved or not, is not the focus of this analysis and interpretation, rather the focus is on the social justice imperatives of the policies particularly from an *Ubuntu* perspective. As already argued, all these initiatives are consistent with *Ubuntu* theory of social justice as discussed in chapter four.

However, the problem with this policy shift was that it failed to address the structural basis of injustice imbedded in the colonial education system. As alluded to above, the social and economic organisational structures in place were discriminatory and if these structures remained, no level of cosmetic change would result in a socially just education system. The uneven distribution of human and material resources characteristic of the colonial education system seems to have persisted,

post-independence. The more developed areas seem to have continued to receive more funding at the expense of the remote and rural areas. As noted in the SIDA report;

[g]overnment spends much more on the urban child than on his/her rural counterpart. Equally, within urban areas there are highly disadvantaged schools and pupils. Therefore, the pattern of provision of education in Zimbabwe can be described as being highly unequal and it discriminates much more strongly in favour of the richer groups in society than is compatible with the longer term social and economic objectives of government. Also, the mushrooming of "high - fee" or "trust" schools initiated mainly by Whites resulted in furthering elitism in education contrary to declared government intentions (SIDA, December 1990, p. 8).

This observation highlights the challenges that the government has experienced in trying to dismantle the colonial system in a piecemeal way. Picking and choosing what to retain and what to do away with through legislation, has fostered contradictions between policy pronouncements and implementations. It can be argued, and rightly so, that the colonial education system remained in place and remains today. The main difference is that it has since been legally opened to everyone who wishes to access it (Gordon, 1996). The economic barriers that were put in place by the colonial regime are still in place and only those who are already privileged have full access to what is on offer. Most young people, particularly in rural areas and those living in the townships formerly designed for the blacks still experience exclusion, as was the case before independence (Dzvimbo, 1991). Without continued infrastructural investment in the areas of deprivation, social justice in education has remained and will remain impossible. Once again, the fact that educational opportunities in Zimbabwean schools are still determined by the socio-economic back grounds of the children, demonstrates that the EFA policy has failed to address social justice issues as defined by *Ubuntu* theory of social justice.

8.2.4: Provide adequate tertiary education at university and teacher training colleges.

This was probably the most ambitious of all the EFA goals, given that at independence there was only one university in the country and a few tertiary colleges designed to meet the needs of the few European children. There can be no denying that for a country of the size of Zimbabwe, the first five

years of independence saw a massive and very rapid expansion of the educational facilities at primary and secondary levels. As noted by Dzvimbo; *'[i]n teacher education while only 2,824 students were in training in 1980, the number increased to 16,576 in 1990. The student population at the University of Zimbabwe increased from 2,240 in 1980 to 9,300 in 1990, an increase of 315.2 per cent'* (Dzvimbo, 1991, p. 44). However, the rate of expansion was relatively slower at tertiary level due to several reasons. Firstly, the rate of growth did not need to be at the same pace given that a child would take between 11 and 13 years to move through the system from grade 1 to university. So, the first decade of independence saw the University of Zimbabwe remaining the only government university though of course its capacity was increased more than 10-fold. (SIDA, December 1990).

Secondly, government policy recognised that not every secondary school leaver needed to go to university as the country had no capacity to absorb all the university graduates, so university provision was limited. Thirdly, the government had no financial capacity to build and resource more universities at this stage, more so, given that the focus was more on universal primary and secondary levels.

Fourthly, human resources shortage was another limitation and the government's expansion plans had to reflect these realities (Peresuh & Ndawi, 1998). Evaluations of the progress made in primary and secondary education had shown that over expansion without the necessary financial and requisite human resources had its own problems. Finally, as has already been argued, the education offered particularly at higher levels had to be in line with human resource development needs of the economy. As such the Zimbabwean economy could not absorb the many graduates leaving university, so the government had to balance the requirements of the economy with the need to provide education for all those who needed it. This is a social justice issue given the difficulties of deciding which children should be given opportunities for higher education and which ones denied the same opportunity. This, however, is a discussion for another day.

Expansion in terms of teachers' colleges was nevertheless more rapid as the government needed the teachers to staff the growing demand for qualified teachers as the primary and secondary sectors grew (Maravanyika, 1990; Dzvimbo, 1991; Peresuh & Ndawi, 1998). All these developments point to a government with a clear vision underpinned by social justice principles consistent with *Ubuntu* philosophy. However, it is equally obvious that there was a mismatch between the espoused policy and what was implemented. The government's failure to address the structural inequalities created by the colonial regime meant that despite all the gains made in the first decade of independence, the government only succeeded in perpetuating a stratified society created by the colonial regime. It can be asserted that the policies benefited those who were already advantaged, those who could take advantage of the liberalised education system and could afford to pay the fees required, particularly in the best schools (SIDA, December 1990). The best qualified and experienced teachers continued to prefer the already successful schools leaving the schools that needed them the most, staffed with untrained teachers. Such a development did not promote social justice of any kind, instead it resulted in further dividing society on social class. The gap between the rich and the poor continued to grow leading to the reversal of the initial gains made in the first 10 years of independence. It can be argued that by the turn of the century, Zimbabwe's education system had become so differentiated according to a child's socio-economic background, hence eroding most of the achievements of the first 15 years of independence (Ansell, 2003).

It is also noteworthy at this point, that from an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice, the educational expansion achieved in the first decade fell short of meeting the social justice criteria as it was merely an expansion of an unjust system of education. Introducing different curricula for the socio-economically disadvantaged from that offered to the advantaged was not different from what had been inherited from the colonial regime. The group 'B' and 'C' schools continued to suffer due to lack of resources and consequent staff turnover. At the polar end are well resourced schools offering the 'best' education; the kind of education that every child would want to have and yet only a few can afford to access due to the high fees required. These are the same schools that the

Europeans created for their children in 1979 when it became obvious that independence was inevitable (discussed in chapter five). They had created these schools to exclude African children and perpetuate separation and discrimination. It is those schools that are now serving the new elite in Zimbabwe (Chikombah, 1981; Dorsey, 1989; Kanyongo, 2005).

Another area that is a social justice issue in the tertiary sector is the participation of female students. It has been observed that in the primary and secondary sectors girls' and boys' participation is relatively at par even though more boys transition to secondary than girls (GOZ, 1990; SIDA, December 1990). While there are a range of variables to this effect the two main ones are, the traditional views to the education of the girl child and the barrier of fees payment particularly in rural schools (Mubika & Bukaliya, 2011; Ministry of Education Sports and Culture, 2001; SIDA, 1990). This problem appears to be more acute when looking at statistics at tertiary institutions. Dzvimbo underscores this point with his remark that;

[a]t the University of Zimbabwe, female students constitute 25 per cent of the student population. This is a decline from 26.2 per cent in 1979. It is also becoming clear that due to pressures from the I.M.F. and The World Bank to reduce government participation in both the public and private sectors, private schools at both primary and secondary levels, continue to make a significant contribution to the education system in a country that espouses a radical philosophy (Dzvimbo, 1991, p. 44).

While the education system has been liberalised and equality promoted through access, the question that remains is, access to what?

When these developments are analysed from *Ubuntu* theory of social justice female students are still disadvantaged and the opening of the education system has not changed attitudes towards the education of girls. Respect for particularity and individuality (Chilisa, 2012) demands that who you are (ethnicity, gender, tribe, social back ground etc.) should not determine your capacity to fully participate as a citizen, yet it would appear these variables still have a bearing in Zimbabwe's education system.

One must acknowledge here that in traditional Ndebele and Shona (Zimbabwe's two main tribal groups) tribal societies which are patriarchal, women had a lower social status relative to men (Gordon, 1996). However, even within this cultural context there was a recognition that this was a distinction in terms of the roles that were assigned to men and women in society. There was never, an ontological position of women being perceived as inferior to men. In fact, culturally, women and children occupied a privileged position of protection against anyone who chose to take advantage of their social role to discriminate and or abuse their position within that role. The 'correct' interpretation of *Ubuntu's* relational ontology and epistemology safeguarded whoever was deemed to be 'weak' in any context. Consequently, to see *Ubuntu* as discriminatory towards women is a misinterpretation of *Ubuntu* philosophy. As noted in chapter four, an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice advocates for the respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging. In this light, one can argue that the EFA policy therefore missed this aspect of *Ubuntu*, to transform both the traditional attitudes and those promoted by the colonial regime where girls were excluded from formal education.

We must also remember that there was no formal education (in a Euro-Western sense) in Zimbabwe before the colonial regime and it is within the Education Acts discussed in chapter five that we first see the discrimination of girls and their exclusion from formal education. In *Bantu* traditional education, men and women were educated in line with their traditional roles and no one was excluded from that education system. It is with the introduction of the market economy by the white settlers that we begin to see laws that specifically address who should be educated and how. If as already argued in this thesis, social justice is integral to *Ubuntu*, it would be a contradiction to argue that in *Ubuntu* philosophy girls are discriminated against in an *Ubuntu* informed education system. It is in light of this observation that I conclude that EFA as implemented in Zimbabwe lacks *Ubuntu* social justice.

8.2.5: Provide constant upgrading and supervision of teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Provision of highly trained and qualified teachers is the hallmark of an effective system of education (Carter, 2015). While this is a contestable claim, there is a sense in which the claim reflects a common understanding of the value and necessity of the need to train teachers as part of quality assuring teaching and learning in schools. It has been argued time and time again, that an education system is only as good as its teachers and without good teachers there can be no good education system (Ball, 2000; Irina Bokova- Director – General, UNESCO, 2013; Carter, 2015). The new government of Zimbabwe was from the outset cognisant of the need to train teachers, if their policy on EFA was to be sustainable and achieve the desired outcomes. Consequently, teacher education expanded quickly in response to the demands of a rapid expanding school system (GOZ, 1990). The early 1980s saw an influx of expatriate teachers from Australia, USA, South Africa amongst others, deployed in schools to support the expansion programme and thus providing the much needed ‘quality’ in both school management and administration and instruction in the classrooms.

While these expatriates were genuinely offering the best quality of teaching and learning and in some instances providing CPD for the unqualified teachers in the schools, questions could be raised when analysing these arrangements from an *Ubuntu* social justice perspective. To what extent were these foreign teachers ideologically aligned to the new policy agenda? While it would be difficult to do justice to such a question within the methodological limitations of this thesis, there is a sense in which very little considerations would have been given to the social justice implications of adopting such strategies in resolving the skills shortages experienced by the education sector soon after independence. While most of these foreign teachers were ‘good’ teachers, to what extent were they the ‘right’ people ideologically to support the transition state? Did they receive any training on social justice education or on ‘critical pedagogy’ (Kincheloe, 2008) prior to their deployment? Such

questions and many more beyond the scope of this thesis need addressing if we are to evaluate policy implementation in postcolonial Zimbabwe's education system.

Another problem with the quality of teaching and learning particularly in rural schools was the level of dropouts. This was a serious problem for remote disadvantaged schools, who for a combination of factors struggled to retain both pupils and teachers (SIDA, 1990; Education for All 2015 National Review Report). Given that these schools had relatively poor pass rates compared to urban schools, pupils and their parents did not see the value of spending four years in secondary education only to leave without the coveted 'O' levels. In some of these schools there was no evidence of education making a difference in the lives of those who persevered to the end and with high teacher turnover, there was nothing to sustain the motivation to persevere.

As captured in the SIDA report;

[f]inancial constraints and lack of adequate vehicles militates against the provision of sufficient supervision and professional advice to schools and student teachers out on teaching practice. Most likely, this situation contributes to the high instances of teacher absenteeism highlighted in a number of evaluation reports. The prolonged absence of Education Officers (EDS) from rural secondary schools in particular means that inexperienced Teachers in Charge (TICS) are left to run schools as they see fit. It is not surprising that most rural day secondary schools are poorly administered compared to primary schools in the same locality (SIDA, December 1990, p. 10).

This lack of financial resources particularly in the rural areas had and continue to have inevitable consequences to the quality of teaching and learning. With the shortage of qualified teachers, it is the poorly resourced schools that fail to attract and or retain qualified and experienced teachers. With poorer communities failing to provide good facilities both in terms of teaching facilities and housing for their teachers they tended to move to better resourced areas and these were to be found in urban areas. In the 1980s it was common to find rural schools with full staff complements of untrained teachers. Those fortunate enough would have at least a newly qualified teacher as their headmaster. Such shortages had a negative impact on both the management and administration of these schools leading to poor quality of teaching and learning for the pupils (SIDA, December 1990).

The situation described above is contrary to any understanding and interpretation of *Ubuntu* philosophy. In chapter four I identified communalism and interdependence as the two key principles of *Ubuntu* philosophy. I also argued that *Ubuntu* social justice is about how interconnected and interdependent people relate not only one to another but also to their environment both physical and spiritual (Chilisa, 2012; Battiste, 2013). The three concepts of *Ubuntu* social justice as relational, respect for Self and Other and as respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging are contradicted in almost everything described above. What happened as part of the implementation of the EFA policy failed to address these basic tenets of *Ubuntu* philosophy. In fact, a closer examination of these developments reflects a colonial legacy where a more individualistic outlook to relationships is at play.

8.2.6: Develop a strong non-formal education section.

Non-formal education (in the context of the policy goal) refers to part-time schooling in the evening, day and study groups. Students do academic and professional courses. It is an addition, alternative and /or a complement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals. While non-formal education might have started targeted at adult learners, those wishing to improve their literacy, it has gradually become more of an alternative to formal education particularly in urban areas, where those who dropout of formal education either due to failure to pay fees or those who would have failed progression exams find a way to continue with their education until they can re-join the formal sector (Zimbabwe National Statistical Agency (ZIMSTAT), Education Report 2013).

In 1980 the development of the informal education sector was targeted at those who had been disadvantaged by the education policies of the colonial administration and failed to pursue their education. There were also thousands of young adults whose education opportunities had been disrupted by the war of independence and could not go back to formal education due to other responsibilities as adults. Furthermore, there were others who had just returned from the

neighbouring countries where they had been refugees during the war. All these people had had their education disrupted. While some could be absorbed into the formal sector, the majority could not, hence the need for an informal sector that would offer them opportunities to develop their skills and fully participate in the development of the country. (SIDA, 1990; ZIMSTAT, 2013) The Adult literacy programme in Zimbabwe has been part of the non-formal education programme since its inception in 1980 (Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Zimbabwe). There is no doubt that Zimbabwe has since independence had had one of the most effective non-formal education programmes as evidenced by the literacy rate of 97% by the year 2000 (ZIMSTAT, 2013). This literacy rate was one of the highest in Africa or amongst the so-called developing countries (SIDA, 1990).

Once again, this attitude to opening the education sector was informed by the declaration of education as a human right in 1980 which allowed the government to extend funding of these programmes beyond the formal sector. Also, because of the numbers of people who had been disadvantaged during the war of liberation it was possible to organise these literacy classes into viable programmes. It is also important to note that literacy in this context included, reading, writing and numeracy. While funding was always going to be the main challenge towards achieving this goal, signing up to the EFA goals the Zimbabwean government opened funding streams for such programmes from international organisations such as UNICEF and other Non- Governmental Organisations (NGO) and partners such as SIDA (Education for ALL 2015 Review Report: Zimbabwe).

As discussed above this goal is consistent with the *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. Participation of all members of the community in every aspect of being is characteristic of *Ubuntu* philosophy. This is in line with the concepts of respect for individuality, particularity, historicity and belonging (Chilisa, 2012; Battiste, 2013). By recognising that thousands of people had been disadvantaged educationally by both the historical injustices of the colonial period and the subsequent disruptions during the war of independence, the government took the first step towards facilitating for a socially just education system through the development of a strong non-formal education system. However,

like the imbalances observed when analysing the formal sectors of Zimbabwe's education system, what was achieved in policy terms was not necessarily translated into practice. While informal education could easily be promoted and monitored in urban areas it was not the case in rural areas. Again, the levels of illiteracy were greater in rural areas than they were in urban areas and yet the challenges of addressing these problems were greater still in rural areas (SIDA, 1990; ZIMSTAT, 2013; UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2013/14; Education for All 2015 Review Report: Zimbabwe).

Compounded by levels of poverty associated with rural Zimbabwe, it follows that once the resources dwindled as was the case in the 2000s going forward, most of these literacy programmes were abandoned. As evident in the EFA National Action Plan (2005) the objectives and targets for achievement by 2015 include; to achieve universal basic education in literacy and numeracy, increase community awareness of and desire for literacy, remove barriers to access to education, greater participation by disadvantaged groups, training of adult and non-formal educators and the promotion of partnerships in the provision of non-formal education. These targets highlight the difficulties the government had experienced since 1980 and the enormity of the challenge ahead.

Critical to the negations of the *Ubuntu* philosophy in these objectives and targets is the communitarian element of *Ubuntu*. This is clearly a 'done to model' which is evidenced by the largely donor dominated models particularly in rural areas. Also, the centralisation of the curricula used in these programmes meant that most of the adult learners, though they could now read and write did not find the processes equally empowering. Instead of the literacy programmes built around content relevant to the people in each area, content was developed by central government as though participants would be taking a national exam at the end. This is evidenced by the fact that in some instances once adult learners became literate enough they were then enrolled on a parallel grade one to seven (formal primary education) programme of the formal education system run in the afternoons and evenings (Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Zimbabwe). This attests to a deficit model that is contrary to the 'true' spirit of *Ubuntu* ontology and epistemology which are

both relational and do not demand uniformity in both knowledge and contribution to society. For instance, why would an adult in the community need to pass grade seven and get a certificate when the purpose of their adult education programme is designed for their full participation in what they are already doing rather than for an academic career? These are some of the challenges that are associated and emanate from a colonial educational infrastructure that does not recognise someone as educated unless they are certified by the formal systems of education. This phenomenon also begs the question on what we mean by literacy.

Two other points need to be observed with the progress made in literacy figures particularly since 2010. The Education for All (2015) National Review Report notes that since 2009 there has been a decline in the number of people participating on these programmes particularly in rural areas. One of the reasons being that the government stopped paying allowances to the adult education tutors in 2009 (UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2013/14). This obviously means that the already disadvantaged rural people could not afford to sponsor their own education by paying their teacher's allowances. Also, as already argued, the done to model could only be sustained if the government continued to pay for it. If the rural populations did not take ownership of these programmes, it is not surprising that once the funding dried up, the community did not see the need to seek alternative funding streams.

Another observation is that, if indeed the literacy rates had improved to 92%, then naturally the number of people enrolling on these programmes would decline as there were fewer people who needed these programmes. This should also be analysed together with statistics of the success of the primary and secondary education over the years. If primary enrolments figures reflected meeting the targets as set out in the EFA achievement goals, then it follows that as success is achieved at primary and secondary sectors, there would be a natural reduction on the number of people who reach adulthood without requisite literacy levels, thus rendering the adult literacy programmes less necessary. However, the same report shows that due to the poor quality of

teaching and learning in the formal sectors particularly in rural areas, there had been an increase in the demand for informal education particularly in private colleges in urban areas. Thousands of school leavers have left formal education without the required qualifications making it necessary for them to use the private and non-formal education sectors to continue their education (Peresuh & Ndawi, 1998). Unfortunately, this scenario has tended to further disadvantage those who are already disadvantaged and unable to pay for their education. The privatisation of education has resulted in widening the gap between those who are relatively wealthy and the poor (UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2013/14). In this light it can be concluded that most of the measures discussed above have not made the education system more socially just.

8.2.7: Ensure that education is not only qualitatively improved but is as cost effective as possible.

The quality of educational provision has always been an area of concern since independence when the rapid expansion raised questions on how the new government would ensure that quality is developed and sustained. The obvious question was in relation to whether there were enough resources to support the expansion and not compromising the quality. Critical to this concern was the quality of teachers given that at independence there were not enough qualified teachers to staff all the new schools particularly in rural areas. Maravanyika (1990), UNESCO (1993), Ndawi (1996) observe that in 1981 only 21% of the teaching staff in primary and secondary schools were qualified. With such statistics it goes without saying that the quality of education offered was compromised by the rapid expansion soon after independence. It is also clear that the government's initial focus was on quantitative gains as opposed to qualitative gains. While the ideal would have been to do the two concurrently, it is equally clear that the new government of Zimbabwe had no capacity to achieve both at the same time, hence the prioritisation of quantitative expansion as the initial phase of redressing the colonial imbalances in education. The EFA National Action Plan (2005);

--- described quality of education as comprising the following: (a) financial, material, and human inputs; (b) curriculum relevance; (c) infrastructure; (d) distance of schools from the

community; (e) learner performance in public examinations and satisfactory outcomes at individual learner levels; and (f) teacher and teaching and learning processes' (Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Zimbabwe, p. 49).

Defined in these terms, it is clear that in the first decade of the EFA programme, the quality of education in Zimbabwe was below the desired standards particularly in former African schools in urban and rural areas. Several reasons would account for these poor standards. Firstly, this was an inherited situation from the colonial period where the provision of education for Africans was not comparable to that offered to their European counterparts (Maravanyika, 1990). This has been discussed in detail in chapter five. The fulcrum of this argument, however, is that as the government sought to open the education system and redress the colonial imbalances their focus was more on addressing inequality through access. The desire to ensure that every child had access to education, particularly in primary and secondary education made these giant commitments towards EFA without addressing the quality issues. These commitments were driven by the government's own conviction that education is a human right, as evidenced by the inclusion of this position in the Education Act (1987), the government being signatory to the 1948's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and being signatory to the outcomes of the WCEFA (March 1990, Jomtein meeting in Thailand) where the first EFA global programme was established (Rao, 2007; Education for All 2015 National Review Report). As such no barrier could be allowed to stand in the way of facilitating and ensuring that this right was accorded to every Zimbabwean child.

Notwithstanding this noble conviction, the fact that the inherited socio-economic and political structures were unjust, also meant that the new government had to be selective in how they would redress the inherent imbalances in the system. It had taken the colonial government 90 years to build the existing infrastructure and therefore it was going to take time to redress the imbalances. My focus however is not on whether the government succeeded in doing so or not; but rather I am focusing on how it was done and whether in doing so the government adopted an ideological position that would lead Zimbabwean people becoming *abantu* (Human) once again. It has been argued that the colonial system had dehumanised both blacks and whites. The question is how the

policy shift ensured that this dehumanisation is redressed. I want to maintain my argument as I have done with all policy objectives and targets that in terms of the foundational basis of the policy shift, the EFA policy was and remains consistent with an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice.

Prioritising the participation of every Zimbabwean child in the education system and facilitating for the observation of education as a human right take precedence to the degree and quality of that participation. I have already argued that *Ubuntu* is being and becoming; as such becoming is a process and what is critical is that every child can become. So, by opening the education system the government had put every child on this pathway of becoming. The question I would want to focus on in my discussion chapter is, becoming fully what?

8.3: Conclusion.

One of the problems with a western conceptualisation of human rights is that they are taken to be something that may or may not be given by others. This flawed philosophy from an *Ubuntu* perspective is what has given those in power the misconception that it is in their power either to grant or not to grant those rights. In an *Ubuntu* worldview, these rights are not offered by the other, to the contrary, they are what makes us all human in the relational sense (Battiste, 2000; Chilisa, 2012). To withdraw these rights from another is to deny the same rights from yourself. In other words, to violate the rights of another is to lose your own. This is because to be human is to be socially just or to be becoming socially just hence a deliberate denial of this right to another is to equally lose your humanity. The question for the government at independence should have been, how can we be human again? This is because the colonial system through its discriminatory quest for a dual society had dehumanised blacks, and in doing so had equally dehumanised whites. As such the policies of the new government should have been focusing on gaining our humanity. An *Ubuntu* informed education policy and all other policies would have been the start of a way back to being human again.

In this light, while the foundations on education as a human right were there and consistent with *Ubuntu* theory of social justice; what was constructed on those foundations missed the mark. The new government's professed objective of using education to meet the human resource needs of an unjust economic system meant that the drivers for a socially just education system were undermined from the outset. Given that the market economic system was developed by the colonial regime to support a dual society where whites were advantaged, it is difficult to see how an education system designed to meet the manpower needs of such a system could be itself just. As such, the use of education to stratify society in terms of educational attainment meant that those who were advantaged would continue to benefit, while those disadvantaged continued to suffer from the same injustices experienced during colonial times. It is not surprising therefore, that soon after independence those who had become the new political elite or who were connected politically, soon positioned themselves as whites had done during the colonial period (Maravanyika, 1990; Dzvimbo, 1991; Kanyongo, 2005).

The infrastructure in every aspect of life (socially, economically and politically) had been designed to advantage the Europeans. Now the same infrastructure was being used to the advantage of those with economic and political power (Dzvimbo, 1991). By failing to dismantle the colonial infrastructure the government failed to address the underlying structures of injustice. Those children whose parents could afford to buy houses in the former white residential areas immediately enjoyed all the benefits formerly enjoyed by the white children while those who remained in the rural areas and residential areas designed for blacks remained as disadvantaged as before. In a way it can be argued that the only benefit for most black children was that in law, they could become whatever and whoever they chose to be. In practical terms however, this remained as challenging as had always been. Given that children across the country still had to take the same examinations as before, meant that the systematic disadvantages remained intact, thus making social justice in education a pipe dream for the majority. In this light, the pronouncement of the EFA policy made very little difference for most Zimbabwean children.

Some analysts have argued that the expansion of the education system was at the expense of the quality of education offered. More children now had access to education, but of an inferior quality (Maravanyika, 1990; Dzvimbo, 1991; UNESCO, 1991, 1993, 1997). By contrast the quality of education offered to the privileged children in Zimbabwe has continued to improve with some private schools offering education comparable to anywhere in the world. This of course notwithstanding the fact that even this so called 'quality' education is socially unjust as it is colonising. Those in political power have even shunned local schools preferring to send their children to be educated abroad, particularly when they get to higher education. Once educated abroad they return to take most of the high-profile jobs in the country. All this is evidence of the fact that the government officials themselves who are responsible for implementing the EFA policy do not have faith in the system they have created.

It is therefore evident that the implementation of the EFA policy has only succeeded in replicating, be it at a larger scale and to an inferior 'quality', the same system introduced in Zimbabwe by the colonial regime. This is a system that undermined the essence of *Ubuntu* in a systematic way over a period of 90 years. Firstly, the indigenous knowledge systems through which *Ubuntu* values, practices and sense of being and belonging were eroded over time. Secondly, *Ubuntu* relationality (dependence and interdependence), which defines social justice as the essence of being human is greatly undermined by any system that allows an individual to define their humanity without respect for both Self and Other and a sense of belonging. Thirdly, respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging which are core tenets of *Ubuntu* theory of social justice are undermined by a system of education which is designed to develop human resources for an economic system that is socially unjust by *Ubuntu* definitions. I conclude therefore by positing that the introduction of the Global Education for All policy as Zimbabwe's post-colonial education policy, without the necessary curriculum and other *Ubuntu* informed reforms was pernicious. Dare I add, noxious to the core, as this policy shift has failed to take Zimbabweans towards being human again.

Chapter 9

Education for All and *Ubuntu* Social Justice: A Discussion.

9.1: Introduction.

Having analysed the EFA policy through an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice the stage is now set for a discussion that should empower me to make a meaningful contribution to this field. The two key questions addressed in this thesis are; firstly, whether the EFA policy in Zimbabwe, reflects *Ubuntu* social justice? Secondly, whether by implementing this policy the government has succeeded in making Zimbabwe's education more socially just?

We have already established that the introduction of the EFA policy in Zimbabwe was always motivated by the desire to make the education system socially just (GOZ, 1981; Dzvimbo, 1991; UNESCO, 2001; National Action Plan of Zimbabwe (NAPZ), 2005). It was a response to the colonial system of education that had been designed to support a dual society, where whites would remain privileged and protected from competition by blacks in every area of life. On the other hand, the blacks were being educated to fulfil the role of serving the whites (Richards & Govere, 2003). We have also established that at independence, the infrastructure, socially, economically and politically was skewed in favour of the whites. It was therefore necessary to address these imbalances if social justice was to be achieved. Consequently, the policy shift in the education sector was one way of trying to address these imbalances. Part of the rationale for the policy shift in the National Action Plan of Zimbabwe (NAPZ) – 2005 reads;

[t]he need to address these and other imbalances in the education system formed the basis for the post-independence policies. At independence in 1980, education policies in Zimbabwe were a result of a deliberate effort by the Government which came into power, to address the gross inequalities and imbalances which existed. The Government acknowledged that education was the key to socio-economic and political transformation. It also acknowledged that education was a basic human right, which played a pivotal role in combating ignorance, disease and poverty (NAPZ, p. 4).

We have also established through analysing the goals of the EFA policy that the foundational principles of the policy, education as a human right, (GOZ, 1981) are consistent with an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. Embraced in the *Ubuntu* theory of social justice is the idea that all citizens have a right to fully participate in the nation's socio-economic and political development as citizens. This view is also captured in the foreword to the National Action Plan (NAPZ, 2005) by A. S. Chigwedere, the then minister of Education Sports and Culture who wrote; *'[i]t is Government's wish and hope that the achievement of Education For All goals will enable Zimbabweans to contribute more meaningfully to the nation's socio-economic and political development'* (NAPZ, 2005, p. iii). In this regard, the government was not only recognising this right, but was seeking through education to make this right a reality.

However, we have observed from the EFA review report (2015) that the goals have not yet been met and the country is far from meeting these goals. In some instances, the implementation of the EFA policy did not necessarily yield the desired outcomes; rather, it was argued that the opposite has been achieved. For instance, the gap between the rich and the poor has continued to widen in Zimbabwe. Those living in rural areas have seen very little improvement if at all, other than greater access to schools and free education in the primary sector (Jansen, 1991; Ansell, 2002). The quality of education in government run schools has also declined as the new black elite have taken over from the whites and reproduced the same systems at a larger scale, but with fewer resources (Ansell, 2002; Kanyongo, 2005). The government's failure to dismantle or transform the colonial infrastructure socially, economically and politically has meant that the inherited inequalities and imbalances have been increased by the education system. These developments are contrary to *Ubuntu* philosophy as captured in the maxim, "I am because we are, and we are because I am" as discussed in depth in chapter three. It is these challenges that I seek to discuss in this chapter and also look at what could have been done to ensure that the policy shift had capacity to deliver the noble foundational principles of the EFA policy.

In this chapter I use *Ubuntu* theory of social justice as my analytical, interpretive and discursive device in unpicking the processes and outcomes of the EFA policy. The concept of *Ubuntu* as an Afrocentric worldview has been used throughout this thesis and thus continues to be the fulcrum of this discussion chapter. However, I have also introduced two other concepts as my explanatory devices. These are the concept of ‘passive revolution’ raised by Dzvrimbo (1991) and Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemonic power (1971). These two concepts are introduced to help explain the challenges the government might have faced in trying to implement the EFA policy. It is important to recognise nevertheless, that these two concepts do not introduce new subject matter to this thesis. Rather, they help bring clarity to why *Ubuntu* social justice could not be achieved despite the government’s declared intentions of redressing the colonial inequalities and imbalances through the education system.

When Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, it inherited a curriculum that had already been condemned as racist, elitist, Eurocentric, competitive, individualistic, and capitalist oriented (Chung & Ngara, 1985). It must be stressed at the outset, that all these attributes are contrary to *Ubuntu* philosophy and therefore *Ubuntu* theory of social justice as discussed in chapter four. As such, the success of the policy shift demanded that these issues be addressed through reforming the curriculum. As its response, the new government of ZANU [PF] announced its adoption of “scientific socialism” as its reconstruction ideology (Election Manifesto, 1980). As Jansen rightly observes, *‘[c]urriculum reconstruction became one of the most important ideological vehicles of the socialist state’* (Jansen, 1991, p. 79). Consequently, the espoused curriculum goals as outlined in the Election Manifesto (1980), the campaign speeches, of soon to be Prime Minister of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe, and the Three Year Transitional National Development Plan (1982/83-1984/85) were very specific. Jansen synthesises these goals as follows;

(1) to develop a socialist consciousness among students; (2) to eliminate the distinction between manual and mental labor; (3) to adapt subject-matter content to the Zimbabwean cultural context; (4) to foster cooperative learning and productive development strategies as

part of the school curriculum; and (5) to increase opportunities for productive employment (Jansen, 1991, p. 79).

However, despite these specific espoused curriculum goals, there is evidence of greater continuity with the colonial curriculum than the reconstruction that could be envisaged based on the scientific socialist ideology. Drawing from my reflections in chapter eight, it is evident that while the new government of Zimbabwe was clear, of what could be done, to transform Zimbabwe's education into a more socially just system, underpinned by a philosophy consistent with *Ubuntu* theory of social justice, it faced some barriers when it came to implementation. I want to propose that; these barriers can be discussed under the two explanatory devices I have introduced in this chapter (passive revolution and hegemonic power). Under passive revolution we discuss colonial legacies, external pressures and influences and institutional responsibilities for education. While under hegemonic power, we discuss; state ideology, the role of the state and ruling class interests versus popular interests.

Through these two explanatory devices (passive revolution and hegemonic power), I want to demonstrate that while the EFA policy was implemented and based on principles of social justice consistent with *Ubuntu* theory of social justice; there were fundamental flaws in the inherited socio – economic and political infrastructure, which militated against the realisation of social justice. I also want to argue that, it is these structures that are at odds with the concept of *Ubuntu*, and as such, it is imperative that these structures are dismantled or transformed, if *Ubuntu* social justice is to be a realistic possibility. I therefore begin my discussions by introducing these concepts before going back to *Ubuntu* to draw some conclusions that will inform my recommendations.

9.2: The Passive Revolution.

Gramsci posits that one of the principles of a passive revolution is;

(1) '--- that no social formation disappears as long as the productive forces which have developed within it still find room for further forward movement; and (2) that a society does

not set itself tasks for whose solution the necessary conditions have not already been incubated, etc' (Gramsci, 1971, p. 106).

Gramsci (1971) further argues that lack of full mass participation in a revolution and the subsequent difficulties faced by the new political formation in dismantling strong historical economic forces results in what he calls the passive revolution. I want to begin by agreeing with Dzvimbo (1991) when he argues that Zimbabwe experienced a passive revolution. At independence in 1980, the colonial socio-economic, cultural and even political infrastructure was intact. To this end, Gordon observes that;

[t]he socialist revolutionary myths that had developed during the war of independence, and the attempts by the new government to perpetuate those myths notwithstanding, African nationalism had competed with 'white settlerism' for political and economic power but had not challenged the capitalist structure of colonial Rhodesia. The Lancaster House Agreement, which became the constitution of Zimbabwe, ensured that the new state inherited the key structures of the colonial apparatus, concomitantly ensuring the continued dominance of foreign capital and so delineating the historically based framework and parameters for socio-economic action in the post-independence period (Gordon, 1996, p. 223).

This is a position taken by Mandaza (1986) when discussing the role of the British government in shaping postcolonial Zimbabwe. It follows therefore, that the liberation war had failed to dismantle the colonial structures that had been developed with the express purpose of administering the colony in the interest of British capital. While the new government had now taken political and some economic power from the settler government, the interests of foreign capital were still intact and as dominant as they had been throughout the colonial era. Even with political power and system of government, the structures were modelled on the same colonial parliamentary system (Zvobgo, 1981).

If Gramsci's definition is adopted, then it follows that the Zimbabwean war of independence can be classed as a passive revolution (Dzvimbo, 1991). It was passive because it was largely led from outside, as the liberation forces were based in Zambia and Mozambique where the training camps were located and also in the fact that while the new government spoke of socialism as their

preferred ideological position, they still needed financial backing from those who held economic power (Zvobgo, 1981).

Reflecting on the challenges faced by the government in its quest for social justice, Dzvimbo (1991) makes the following insightful observation;

--- that the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU PF) leadership was not able to institute its socialist agenda because the Zimbabwean revolution was a passive revolution or revolution from above in which the masses were not fully integrated in the political and economic transformation of society (Dzvimbo, 1991, p. 49).

ZANU PF is the governing political party that has ruled in Zimbabwe since the attainment of independence in 1980. Dzvimbo (1991) contends that those who had led the revolution, together with those who left the country to fight the white- settler regime, were not in accord with the masses who had remained behind. In other words, the perceived ideological shift from a capitalist economic system to a socialist one advocated by the new government did not address the aspirations of the masses, and as such, this became a problem for the new government. Dzvimbo's analysis must not be misconstrued to mean that the masses had not participated in the war of liberation, because they did, and any other interpretation would be a misrepresentation of reality. The question that we need to address none the less is, how did the passive revolution affect the country's move towards an *Ubuntu* informed socially just education system? Shouldn't the dismantling of these colonial structures have been the priority?

In chapter seven, it was established that while the post-colonial government of Zimbabwe had good intentions when making an education policy shift from that of the colonial period, which was designed to support a dual society, to EFA where educational access was expanded and opened to every child, the effectiveness of this policy shift remains contestable. While there have been unquestionable gains; in terms of opening educational access, infrastructural development, literacy (which was at 92% by the turn of the century) (Ansell, 2003), and broadening participation, what

cannot be denied is that Zimbabwe is still far from achieving EFA and as such, further away from *Ubuntu* social justice (Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Zimbabwe).

9.2.1: Colonial Legacies.

That Zimbabwe had a passive revolution, is best encapsulated in analysing Zimbabwe's colonial legacy and how it influenced the post-colonial education system. In discussing colonial legacy in education, Ansell argues that, '*[c]olonial education was no more the expression of a unified voice than is present-day education*' (Ansell, 2003, p. 100). This observation is at the heart of the argument here. What we collectively call the colonial system of education was a product of different interests groups, ranging from the political regime (who before 1960 took orders from the UK), internal and international capital, represented by mine owners, farmers, industrialists and other business groupings (who employed black labourers), the white settler class (who needed protection from competition from blacks), churches (who financed and run most schools), the black population (who attended and paid fees and resisted changes in education which they deemed unfavourable) and indeed British interests as the colonial motherland (who sponsored the Lancaster House agreement) (Zvobgo, 1994; Ansell, 2003).

The colonial education system thus represented these divergent interest groups, with each group pushing its agenda forward and as such, the education system was a site for struggles. We need to understand of course, that some within these interest groups had more power, hence leverage than others, with some having their interests being totally ignored. A case in point will be black women, who despite their crucial role providing labour for farmers and keeping the African social system going while their husbands were working in mines and industries in urban centres, they had the least voice (Gordon, 1996). Given that at independence, all these different groups were still there and most of them still had 'capital', if not political influence; the new government still had to contend

with their influence. At independence, the new black government became another powerful voice in the struggle for the education system.

What is evident to me is that at independence the new government was very clear that the colonial legacy could not be the foundation upon which to build a new Zimbabwe. This is well articulated by Chung and Ngara when they warned that;

[t]o preserve and expand the colonial education system and to expect it to form a suitable foundation for the establishment of socialism is both unwise and unrealistic because there is no way in which the colonial curriculum can perform functions alien to its nature and objectives (Chung & Ngara, 1985, p. 96).

Yet as we have observed and will continue to observe throughout this discussion, the new government did exactly what Chung and Ngara (cited above) had warned against. We must remember that Chung was the Minister of Education and Culture in Zimbabwe between 1988 and 1993 and before that she was Deputy Secretary for Administration in the Ministry of Education. This therefore speaks to constraints that the new government found difficult to overcome despite their espoused ideology and policy pronouncements. The colonial legacy was therefore a barrier to educational reforms. Dzvimbo (1991) therefore makes a poignant point in his characterisation of the Zimbabwean revolution as a passive revolution. The question I want to raise is how does the notion that Zimbabwe went through a passive revolution affect the country's move towards an *Ubuntu* informed socially just education system?

Firstly, I argue that the colonial curricula itself was a barrier to reforms. As outlined in chapter five, the colonial education system had been designed for a dual society (Richards & Govere, 2003). While the postcolonial government desired to reform the curriculum (Chung & Ngara, 1985; Zindi, 1987; Chung, 1989) the inherited models were constraining. To transform the curriculum required a whole raft of changes from teaching materials, textbooks, retraining teachers, changing the teacher's college curriculum, changing the exam system; all of which were better identified than reformed. The colonial education culture was even more challenging than the shortage of resources. Zindi

(1987) observed that changing the attitudes of civil servants and teachers trained by the colonial system was more challenging than might have been envisaged. Some of these officials had influential positions within the system and expecting them to give up on years of personal and professional investment proved too simplistic.

Even more challenging was vocationalising the curriculum. By creating a two-tier system, one academic and elitist (F1) (reserved for whites & only the top 12.5% of the black children) and a vocational system (F2) (reserved for black rural children), the colonial regime had trained Africans to view the vocational system as inferior to the academic curriculum. There was therefore a stigma attached to this curriculum and blacks had resisted such educational reforms in 1966 (Zvobgo, 1981; Richards & Govere, 2003; Ansell, 2003). With academic education leading to better paying white-collar jobs in the city, while vocational education only resulting in becoming a farm labourer, garden 'boy', low paid factory worker etc.; African children and their parents aspired for an academic curriculum and therefore resisted any attempts to reintroduce vocational education. Fey Chung aptly, sums up this government predicament when she wrote; *'[t]he school system is very constraining because we can't move away very far from the models we inherited. If we did, we would have a political uproar'* (Chung, 1989, p. 41).

Chung's comment cited above reveals that the new government knew what was needed but lacked the political will to implement the policies fully. It made political sense to go along with what people wanted than to reform the education system. The government's failure to challenge these colonial legacies was a betrayal of *Ubuntu* philosophy. *Ubuntu* social justice's respect for Self and Other, speaks to, the individual being 'true' to him/her -self, and equally being 'true' to the Other. In this context, the political elites put their political interests above the best interests of the nation. In so doing *Ubuntu* social justice was sacrificed. The same was done when they facilitated that all children write the 'O' level GCE exams, fully knowing that only 25% of the candidates could pass these exams (Ansell, 2003). Rural children and their parents were being deceived to sacrifice their money paying

school and exam fees by politicians who were only interested in preserving their political power and pretending to be 'opening' the education system when they knew the door was 'fully locked' for most of the rural children (Ibid). Such levels of political deception are inconsistent with *Ubuntu* social justice. It is therefore clear that colonial legacies, most of which were structural while others were ideological, were a barrier to the development of an Ubuntu informed education system.

9.2.2: Internal and External Pressures.

The second facet of the passive revolution is demonstrable through the new government's continued reliance on both internal and external capital for the implementation of its policies. The powerful capitalist economic base continued to be a hindrance in the government's quest for social justice. Zimbabwe continued to rely on international capital to finance both its economic and social policies. This colonial economic legacy and its inherent structures meant that it was not possible for the government to dismantle the inherited socio - economic structures. It should be borne in mind that one of the drivers of the colonial economic system was in the disenfranchising of the black people in order to force them to participate in a market economic system for their livelihood.

As discussed in chapter five, by destroying their traditional forms of livelihood, and then imposing taxes, the colonial government compelled the Africans to seek employment in mines, factories and as gardeners for the white-settler community to be able to pay their taxes (Richards & Govere, 2003). Since these structures were not dismantled nor transformed at independence, it follows that blacks could not return to their pre-colonial economic systems even if they wanted to. I am not advocating a return to pre-colonial economic systems as doing so would confirm the views and fears of Matolino & Kwindigwi (2013) who view *Ubuntu* as a theory of return as discussed in chapter three. Indeed, this would be a disservice to the concept as a legitimate Southern African philosophy of being. To the contrary, my point is that, if the colonial socio-economic and cultural infrastructure remained intact, an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice could not be implemented, as it is philosophically

incompatible to the Euro-Western socio-economic and cultural foundations upon which it was being built. This presumes that this is what Gramsci meant when he said ‘--- *that no social formation disappears as long as the productive forces which have developed within it still find room for further forward movement*’ (Gramsci, 1971, p. 106). Therefore, if the colonial legacy could still find room to develop and grow, there was no way its influences could be expected to disappear or at least diminish. These influences are incompatible to *Ubuntu* social justice. Given that these influences were at the heart of the education system, it follows that even the future generations would continue under Euro-Western coloniality.

Secondly, even though the education system was expanded and ‘opened up’, its financing still depended on the capitalist economic system. As such, it was not possible for the government to abandon the colonial economic system and still support their social programmes, as the two were dependent of each other. A good example to cite, is that while the government expanded and opened access to education, the curriculum remained predominantly the same, resulting in graduates who would have the same aspirations, values and worldview defined by a colonially focussed knowledge base (Jansen, 1991; Ansell, 2003). Given that the same white mine owners, farmers and factory owners as was the case before independence employed many of the school leavers; they still demanded the same skills as they had demanded from their settler government. Therefore, they had a big influence on the kind of education on offer both in terms of the curriculum and in terms of its implementation.

The pressure exerted on the state by international capital, particularly the IMF meant that the government had to compromise and abandon some of its social projects. The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) introduced in Zimbabwe in the 1990s meant that unless the state met the conditions (which included reducing public spending) set by the IMF they would not receive further support from the international community (Maravanyika, 1990; Curriculum Review Process Narrative Report, 2014 - 2015). The involvement of other international organisations and NGO’s

such as SIDA, The World Bank, UNESCO, UNDP and the like, explains why the new government found it difficult to make radical changes to the education system. Most of these organisations had their own interests and agendas, and any funding would be negotiated on condition, the government adhered to the organisation's goals (Ansell, 2003). A closer reading of the World Bank Report on Education in Zimbabwe (1989) reveals that there was more emphasis on educational expansion, access and examinations. There was also a negative perception on practical and commercial subjects, which were deemed costly. Resultantly, these subjects were dropped from the Zimbabwe Junior Certificate exams (GOZ, 1991). Yet according to the CIET (1999) report, a more practical and vocationalised education system is what Zimbabwe needed, rather than an academic, exam-oriented system favoured by the World Bank as noted above. While such organisations would not want to be perceived as dictating the policy direction and implementation to the receiving government, it is very clear that receiving governments are normally left with very little choice. As already noted, the state's dependence on both local and international economic powers, constrained their policy implementations (Dzvimbo, 1991). As such, without the dismantling of the inherited capitalist economic system, the new government of Zimbabwe was always destined to fail in delivering *Ubuntu* social justice in education and other sectors.

An *Ubuntu* informed education system would start with the needs of those who are being educated instead of the goals and agendas of the donor organisations. There is a sense in which, most of the support and involvement of these international organisations in Zimbabwe's post-colonial education system were motivated by the desire to monitor and control, not only the direction, but also the degree of change. The example from the World Bank Report (1989) cited above is a case in point. Instead of the World Bank finding out what was best for the people of Zimbabwe, they steered the curriculum back to an academic, examination-oriented model that had been responsible for disenfranchising millions of Zimbabwean young people under both the colonial system and the post-independence education system. Again, the fact that these international organisations use their capital power to enforce their policy preferences, demonstrate the lack of *Ubuntu* social justice. We

have already noted earlier that *Ubuntu* thrives on consensus building (Louw, 2001), and yet from the examples given above these international organisations tended to dictate their policy preferences and used their financial leverages to force the government to conform.

Economic power dynamics are at play in these so-called development partnerships and as such, those with economic power always have their way. Such a relationship is inconsistent with *Ubuntu* social justice that is built on relationality, respect for Self and Other and respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging. A genuine respect for historicity would allow and support the government to address the needs of indigenous people without pushing the agenda of these international organisations that can be defined as 'conceptually Western' and colonial in ideology.

9.2.3: Institutional Responsibilities for Education.

Education in Zimbabwe has historically always been the battlefield for all who want to have influence on the population. In chapter five, I argued that during colonial times the battle was between the church, the colonial regime and the black African leaders (Richards & Govere, 2003; Kanyongo, 2005). Whoever won this battle would have the final say on the curriculum and hence the knowledge base, values, skills and the aspirations of the young people in particular. Post-colonial education was no exception to this tag of war, only this time there were more interest groups involved; namely, the transition state, the church, the internal and external capital and indeed the black population (only this time divided into the middle class and the poor, predominantly rural people) (Mungazi, 1982; 1990). We also noted in chapter five that the church having been responsible for the education of Africans, had lost their influence on the colonial government as the government sought to control the education of the Africans (Mungazi, 1990; Kanyogo, 2005). This meant that at independence, the new government was the dominant interest group in this battle to control the education system, and yet lacked the financial power and political will to implement its policies.

As Ansell, (2003) observes, the new government maintained its stranglehold on education through three arms of control. These are the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture (MoESC) (the name has changed several times over the years), Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) (mainly responsible for the examination system) and the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU). Through these arms of control, the government of Zimbabwe has been the main responsible authority for educational reforms. Within these contestations, it is evident that political and economic power have been the dominant forces. As such, it is those within these interest groups who wield these powers who have the final say in the terms of educational reforms.

9.3: Hegemonic Power.

The second set of barriers to the transformation of the education system in post-colonial Zimbabwe can be discussed under what Gramsci (1971) calls hegemonic power. Gramsci defined social hegemony and political government as;

1. [t]he “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is “historically” caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.
2. [t]he apparatus of the state coercive power which “legally” enforces discipline on those groups who do not “consent” either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in application of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed (Gramsci, 1971, p.12).

In employing this Gramscian characterisation of power and governance, Dzvimbo (1991) asserts that the post-colonial state in Zimbabwe could be defined in these terms. To understand the power dynamics in postcolonial Zimbabwe it is necessary to look at the power blocks that emerged soon after independence. Given what Dzvimbo (1991) characterises as a passive revolution, we note that there were five socio-economic and political interest groups, which influence policy decisions and their implementations in Zimbabwe. These were; (1) the poor masses, who even after independence remained in their pre-independence marginalised socio- economic and political conditions; (2) the

white commercial farmers, mine owners and industrialists, who continued to dominate the economic space as they had done during the colonial era but now without the political power to protect their interest beyond their economic power base; (3) the new political elite, who had taken over political power from the colonial regime but lacked the economic muscle to implement most of their projects. This is the group we can describe as the new state hegemony, which was relatively autonomous of all other interest groups (Mandaza, 1986); (4) state bureaucracy, civil society and the emerging middle class. The middle class, were the beneficiaries of the 'opening up' of opportunities that had been preserved for whites and (5) the global economic and international capital represented by organisations such as the IMF, UN, UNESCO, UNICEF etc. These power blocks had different interests in the transition state and the fact that the revolution had been a passive one, created space and different opportunities to each group to influence the policy decisions in their favour. I want to contend that, had the revolution been complete, and by that I mean, the socio-economic and political infrastructure of the colonial era been destroyed or transformed by the liberation war, the postcolonial dynamics and power blocks, would have been constituted differently and possibly the masses would have been the most powerful grouping. Let us begin by discussing state ideology and the role of the state.

9.3.1: State Ideology, the Role of the State and Popular interests.

One of the problems created by 90 years of colonial rule in Zimbabwe was the destruction and incapacitation of the indigenous socio-cultural and economic dynamism, which would have been crucial in the development of a new Zimbabwe. *Ubuntu*, socio-economic, cultural and even political ways of being had been deliberately pillaged by the colonial regime and replaced by Euro- Western forms of being (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). He discusses these deliberate acts of violence against the indigenous peoples in terms of coloniality, a position also well discussed and supported by Mignolo (2011) when discussing what he calls 'the darker side of modernity'. At independence, the new ruling elite seemed to be aware of this problem and were committed to developing this indigenous

socio- cultural and economic dynamism to lead in the redress of the inequalities created by the colonial regime. Unfortunately, the ruling elite chose to be 'state centred' (Moyo & Modiba, 2013) in their approach. Unfortunate because this approach was not characteristic of *Ubuntu* philosophy, hence an opportunity to adopt *Ubuntu* philosophy in the transformation of the colonial system was lost. In what Moyo & Modiba (2013) describe as a 'state centric approach' echoing Dzvimo (1991) the state became the main agent of change and transformation. As the state was relatively autonomous from all the other power blocs, they saw it as the opportunity to lead this transformation starting with the education system.

Mungazi, (1982); Chung & Ngara, (1985); Zvobgo, (1994), Chung, (1995); Richards & Govere, (2003); Ansell, (2003), amongst others, concur that education was a central issue in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle narrative. The new state was to adopt a Marxist ideology with 'scientific socialism' as its declared socio-economic ideology, (Mandaza, 1980; GOZ, 1982; Jansen, 1991; Dzvimo, 1991). Jansen (1991) also suggest that the state is the principal player in shaping the policy direction in any transition state. However, the state ideology is not only projected to the historical conditions, but other interest groups within that historical reality also contest it. In the Zimbabwean situation, this suggestion by Jansen hold 'true' in both respects. Jansen further contends that; *'[t]he curriculum becomes a site of conflict contestation because it embodies the values, norms, objectives, interests, priorities, and directions of the state and other powerful'* (Jansen, 1991, p. 79).

With such a level of ideological clarity and specificity in terms of implementation goals, one would have expected the new government to, not only expand the inherited education system, but to transform it in line with its socialist ideology. However, as Ansell (2003) has already asserted, the new government only succeeded to expand the same colonial education it inherited in 1980. Dzvimo's analysis of Zimbabwe as having gone through a passive revolution might offer an explanation as to why the government failed.

Maravanyika (1990) and Dzvimbo, (1991) suggest that there might have been an ideological contestation between the state and the masses. They further suggest that the masses may never have been interested in ideological transformation. What they had always wanted was the radicalisation of the system to allow them the same rights as their white counterparts. If this analysis is valid, it also follows that any policy shift to the contrary would be resisted as was the case when the government tried to introduce a more vocationalised curricula as part of the EFA in 1986 (Chung & Ngara, 1981; Maravanyika, 1990; Jansell, 1991). It is arguable that most of the blacks wanted their children to receive the same education as offered to white children. As such, they were more interested in the opening of the system than in its transformation. However, what the masses failed to understand was that the colonial legacy meant that society was already stratified, with whites as the advantaged social group while the blacks, disadvantaged. As such, the education system could not be 'opened up' without being transformed. This further supports Dzvimbo's claim that the revolution had been a passive one. To this end, Dzvimbo (1991, p. 50) conclude; *'[t]hus, what we now have in Zimbabwe is the continuation of the old state in a new state or what Antonio Gramsci refers to as revolution-restoration'*.

There are also those who question the political elite's commitment to the Marxist ideology of the Zimbabwean government (Johnson, 1990; Dzvimbo, 1991; Moyo, 1992). This is because once the masses resisted the attempt to vocationalise the curriculum, the elite were quick to abdicate. While Education with Production (EWP) was introduced and billed as the site of educational reform, it was not supported with enough resources to get it off the ground. It remained isolated and never found space in mainstream education. This might explain why teachers, children and parents never really took it to heart and by the mid-80s it was dying a natural death (Ansell, 2003). Zvobgo (1994) attributes the government's failure to reform the education system to their failure to reform the capitalist economic base, a view supported by Dzvimbo (1991) and Jansen (1991). This again might be linked to their conflicted ideological positioning. It is safe to conclude that the government gradually shelved their scientific socialist tenets for capitalist principles such as 'efficiency and

standards'. The government's tough socialist rhetoric gradually disappeared from official communications and where only reserved for political rallies, where such rhetoric was used to placate the electorate in the face of punitive capitalist economic policies such as the ESAP in 1990 (Zvobgo, 1994; Ansell, 2003).

Once again, there is a serious social justice issue here if the above characterisation is correct. In chapter five, I argued that the colonial education system was unjust as it promoted the education and development of one racial group at the expense of the rest. At the beginning of this chapter, I argued that the EFA policy was the new government's drive to reverse the colonial imbalances created during the colonial period. It follows therefore, that the continuation of the expanded old state would not qualify as transformation towards a socially just system. *Ubuntu* theory of social justice advocates for respect for Self and Other. The government's failure to transform the education system allowing for equality of participation for all citizens regardless of race or social class meant that *Ubuntu* social justice had been sacrificed for political expediency. The only difference between the two systems is that while the colonial education system discriminated on the grounds of race, the postcolonial education system continues to discriminate, but this time on social class. Those with political and economic power or connected thereof, have now replaced the whites to form new elite. *Ubuntu* social justice cannot be built on any system that marginalises any member of that social, economic or political group. *Ubuntu* social justice advocates for the full participation of everyone in that community. The fact that the colonial system has been replaced by the new but built on the same principles of restricted participation by the majority, negates the principles of *Ubuntu* social justice as discussed in chapter four.

9.3.2: Ruling Class interests versus Popular Interests.

It is conceivable that in 1980, the ruling elite believed that it was possible to transform the education system through the EFA policy and genuinely sought to create a socialist egalitarian society.

However, what they had failed to understand were the constraints brought to bear by their continued dependence on both local and international capitalist structures and hence capital. Similarly, the masses, had celebrated the coming of political independence with the innocence of a child, completely oblivious of the ensuing socio-economic and political dynamics of a neo-colonial state. The interests of the ruling elite and those of the masses were further complicated by those of multi-lateral agencies who could not be ignored as they continued to brandish financial support for the state as they sought to effect change.

In this light Dzvimbbo rightly observes that;

[b]ecause of Zimbabwe's passive revolution, economic constraints imposed by local and international capital continued to limit the transition state's ability to transform the content and orientation of the education system so that Zimbabwe's socio-economic formation can be changed to benefit the majority who are marginalised politically and economically (1991, p. 46-47).

The retention of the colonial socio-economic and political structures at independence has ensured that power, whether social, economic or political, has remained in the hands of the few. During the colonial era, this power was in the hands of the white minority. However, at independence, political power changed hands to the new ruling elite while economic power remained in the hands of the whites and their international capital bases. This power play is more evident in the contestations on educational policy and the implementations thereof. While the official education policy since 1980 has been EFA, the practical outlook and more importantly the social justice implications have remained the same if not worse for the masses. Once the ruling elite realised that they did not have the economic resources to fully implement the EFA policy, they ensured that they and those connected to them would continue to benefit from an inherited inequitable distribution of educational facilities and resources (Torres, 1989).

Another contradiction is in the state's failure to use education policy to halt the privatisation of education thereby further giving advantage to those who are already advantaged (CIET, 1999). The Education Act, Chapter 25: 2004, clearly states that only The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of

Education Sports and Culture could approve the registration of schools. Consequently, the proliferation of private schools happened under the watchful eye of the government despite their policy rhetoric. Dzvimbo (1991) informs us that while there were only three high fee-paying private schools in 1980, by 1991 there were 51 private schools. The spirit of the EFA policy, if anything, was to use policy to transform the inherited capitalist mode of production, which was individualistic and elitist in nature into a more inclusive system allowing all children to fully participate in their personal development and in turn, of the country (Zvobgo, 1981, 1996; Makuvaza & Hapanyengwi, 2014). To the contrary, what has ensued in Zimbabwe is the reproduction of the same discriminatory capitalist modes of production perpetuated by an elitist form of education that has ensured that the poor are confined to their socio-economically and politically predetermined state (CIET, 1999, Ansell, 2003).

What makes the current state of affairs worse than the colonial period is that this is a situation legitimised by the state. I use the phrase 'legitimised by the state' because while the adverse effects of a growing private school system to the poor were highlighted by the CIET (1999), nothing has been done to stop these developments. Instead, those with both political power and economic means have continued to take advantage of their positions to open new private schools (Nhundu, 1992), a development that has brought further embarrassment for the government. Despite the state rhetoric, it is now a truism that children of upper income backgrounds continue to be over represented in both higher education institutions and subsequently, in better paying jobs while those from poor socio-economic backgrounds; girls and women in rural areas in particular, fulfil the same roles as defined by the colonial regime before independence (Jansen, 1991; Gordon, 1996; Ansell, 2003). It can be concluded, therefore, that the policy shift at independence has only helped in legitimising social inequality and thus social injustice. It has done so by creating what at face value appears to be a meritocratic society where all children have equal opportunities to excel, while those from poor backgrounds are constrained by both the inherited historical imbalances and the post-colonial expansion and reproduction of these imbalances.

The ruling elite's lack of political will to fully implement the social policy initiatives and their appetite to embrace the privileges of the colonial system and then use their new-found political power to create a new hegemony eliminated any chance the people of Zimbabwe had in realising a socially just education system driven by *Ubuntu* philosophy. It is safe to conclude that educational policy contestations will continue in Zimbabwe until there is a new ruling class that is prepared to deconstruct the colonially inherited socio-economic and political hegemonies and push for a social justice agenda that reflects *Ubuntu* social justice.

9.4: *Ubuntu* Social justice.

I want to begin by asserting that *Ubuntu* social justice cannot be obtained in a context where some groups have hegemonic power over others. This is because the philosophy of *Ubuntu* recognised two key principles. These are *Ubuntu* as communalism and *Ubuntu* as interdependence (Chilisa, 2012; Gade, 2014). In chapter four, I posited that communality and interdependence are best expressed through the concepts of interconnectedness and interdependence. I concluded that *Ubuntu* theory of social justice is about how interconnected and interdependent people relate not only to each other but also to their environment and the spiritual world in every aspect of their lives. I argued that three definitional concepts emerge from this understanding, which are, *Ubuntu* social justice as relational; *Ubuntu* social justice as respect for Self and Other and *Ubuntu* social justice as respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging. Informed by this understanding of *Ubuntu* theory of social justice, glaring problems emerge when we look at EFA in Zimbabwe, particularly when focussing not only on the policy itself, but more so in the way it was implemented and the inherited socio-economic and political structures.

9.4.1: Relationality in Post-colonial, Socio-economic and Political structures.

In section 9.2 above, we observed that one of the challenging aspects of post-colonial Zimbabwe was what Dzimbo (1991) calls the passive revolution. I concurred with both Mandaza (1985) and

Dzvimbo (1991) when arguing that the passive revolution meant that the new Zimbabwean government inherited a socio-economic and political structure that had been designed to support a dual society in Rhodesia. Consequently, the post-colonial state in Zimbabwe was not really a new state, but rather it was the old colonial state existing side by side with the new political order. What Magnolo (2011) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) calls coloniality. Given the ideological differences between the colonial regime, which was capitalist in orientation and the new state, which was supposedly socialist in ideology (ZANU PF Electoral Manifesto 1980), it follows that there was a relational struggle from the start. This conflict can be seen in the tensions between those of the old order who wanted to maintain an elitist type of education through the expansion of the private high fee-paying schools designed for the whites and the elite amongst the blacks and those who wanted to transform the education system through such policies as the EFA policy.

Another layer of tensions was between the hegemonic elite and the poor majority whose desire was to see their children receiving the same quality education offered to the children of the elite (Dzvimbo, 1991; Nhundu, 1992). While the state had the political power to make the policies, it still depended on the old order for economic capacity to implement those policies. Such a scenario was crippling for the state given that the old order also had the backing of international capital, which was not sympathetic to the professed state ideology. This duality in power dynamics between the state, which had political power and the residual capitalist modes of production and economic power meant that for long periods of time there was a stalemate and hence very little progress could be made (Curriculum Review Process Narrative Report, 2014 – 2015). Any relational theory of social justice would require a level of consensus before any meaningful progress is achieved. Given that the ideological positions of the state and that of the former were opposites, social justice in Zimbabwe's education system had a still birth. As Dzvimbo (1991) suggests, the problem was to be found in the fact that the revolution which should have dismantled these structures failed to do so as it was passive.

The second problem manifests when we analyse the ruling elite. We have already observed that while the political elite had political power, they only had relative autonomy in economic terms as economic power resided with both the international and local private capital power bases. I have already pointed out (Section 9.2.1) that at independence economic power remained in the hands of the white farmers and industrialists, supported by international organisations such as the IMF, World Bank and of course those western countries such as the UK and USA who had business interests in the country (Maravanyika, 1990; Moyo & Modiba, 2013). This is evident in the introduction of ESAP in 1990, which effectively started the reversal of what had been achieved from 1980 (Kanyongo, 2005). A question can be raised; in relation to their commitment to *Ubuntu* social justice given that, they were mostly products of the Euro-Western education system and were now enjoying the advantages of maintaining this capitalist ideological mode of production. Given the questionable socialist ideological positioning of the masses (Dzvimbo, 1991), one wonders whether the ruling elite might have been sceptical of the backing of the masses if they tried to force through these reforms. Since forcing these policy changes would have resulted in economic decline (initially at least) as international capital fled, it is possible that the ruling elite were not confident that they would get the unwavering support from the masses. As the ruling elite had always wanted to be perceived as a mass driven movement, they could not risk losing the support of the masses particularly those based in the urban centres, who could mobilise and demonstrate against the state (Mandaza, 1985). Retaliation from the white farmers and industrialists (local capital), through disinvesting and other such economic sabotage, seem to have constrained the state in pushing these policies through with or without the International and local capital. Whatever the real or perceived challenges were, what is evident is that the state has not been able to extricate itself from its Euro-Western knowledge and structural systems. This is significant as decolonisation of the education system requires the process of de-linking from the logic of coloniality (Magnilo, 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

As a consequence of the passive revolution as discussed in Gramsci (1971), two challenges have faced the Zimbabwean education system. Firstly, those who are advantaged and therefore part of the elite have lacked commitment to the transformation of the education system through an *Ubuntu* informed EFA policy. They are and continue to be the beneficiaries of the residual Euro-Western elitist education system (Jansen, 1991). It can also be argued, that the hegemonic classes, which included the ruling elite, the international and local capital conspired to undermine the voice of the masses. Policymaking resided with the ruling elite while capital was in the hands of international organisations and local, predominantly white owned business. While these hegemonic classes would have had their voices heard in this policy debate the masses and the needs of their children were ignored. Dzvimbo (1991) makes a poignant point when arguing that the continued exclusion of most Zimbabweans from the policymaking processes continued to marginalise them and their children. The hegemonic elite are therefore doing the same as was seen during the colonial era, where the white minority excluded the majority from all decision-making processes and thus continued to implement policies that would perpetuate their hegemony. *Ubuntu* social justice is underpinned by inclusivity, respect for individuality, particularity, historicity and a sense of belonging. To exclude others from the decision-making process that is central to their transformation is to be oppressive.

The new elite have also used 'democracy' to oppress the rest of the population. By claiming that those in government are democratically elected and therefore mandated to make decisions on behalf of their constituencies, the political elite have legitimised their hegemony. As has been argued by Gramsci (1971) hegemony is when people give consent to those in power or they are coerced through other means to cede that power. More significant however, is the fact that these hegemonic elite saw themselves as separate from the rest of the Zimbabwean population. They promoted and defended their interest against the interest of the ordinary Zimbabweans (masses), as was the case during the colonial era. This 'we' and 'them' binary is contrary to *Ubuntu* where the 'I' 'we' identities are conflated. "I am because we are and we are because I am" (Gade, 2014). As such, to deny the rights of most of the people of Zimbabwe is by *Ubuntu* worldview to deny their own

rights. Once again, that goes against *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. The narrative of the ruling elite also contradicts *Ubuntu* respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging. They seem to justify their hegemony through the narrative of those who liberated the country. Such a narrative excluded the masses from the liberation claims, yet at the same time the ruling elite wanting to locate their legitimacy through claiming to belong to the masses. This is a contradiction as it is a claim to that which is being denied. In *Ubuntu* philosophy, to deny the legitimacy of another is to deny your own, as you can only be defined in terms of your dependence and interconnectedness to the other.

In *Ubuntu* social justice there is respect for consensus. To centralise all decisions on curriculum and exclude the ordinary people from those decisions (as is the case in Zimbabwe where such decisions are the preserve of the cabinet and those closest to them (Dzvimbo, 1991; Moyo & Modiba, 2013), the political elite has adopted the same strategies that the colonial hegemony employed to disenfranchise the blacks (Dzvimbo, 1999; Kanyongo, 2005). This, by any interpretation of *Ubuntu* is a move further away from *Ubuntu* social justice. It is therefore imperative that the people of Zimbabwe once again, begin to struggle to liberate themselves from this oppressive education system, where they are mere objects rather than subjects. *Ubuntu* philosophy is underpinned by the idea that all beings are subjects (Asante, 1998) and therefore have the right to participate and reach consensus in all aspect of life including the education of their children. In fact, *Ubuntu* knowledge systems are not pre-packaged and then delivered to passive recipients; rather, it is dynamic, what Freire (1972a) would have called praxis.

Ubuntu requires reflection and actions on the world in order to transform it. This however cannot take place if those for which the system is designed are excluded from participating in the design of the system. Elitism is an anathema to *Ubuntu* philosophy. There are no class binaries in *Ubuntu* (Samkange & Samkange, 1980; Chilisa, 2012; Mangena, 2012). If I am because we are and we are because I am, it also follows that the socio-economic, cultural and political binaries that have been

highlighted throughout this thesis negate any possibility of *Ubuntu* social justice. Consequently, an elitist, capitalist competitive education system where children are cultured in competing at every level of their education with competitive examinations being the holy grail of the system is anti-*Ubuntu* philosophy (see appendix F, an example of an *Ubuntu* praxis).

Finally, particularity and individuality are both housed in their historical authenticity and a sense of belonging (Louw, 2001; Chilisa, 2012). Historicity focuses on the authentic centeredness of *Ubuntu* as a historical reality upon which an authentic theory of social justice can be constructed. What is questionable when analysing the power dynamics in post-colonial Zimbabwe is the authenticity of the historical claims, particularly the claims of the hegemonic elite. While the former white colonialists continued to use their economic power to subvert the rights of the masses, the ruling elite used their newfound political power to claim superiority over everyone else. They even used their participation in the liberation struggle to claim privileges they were not prepared to share with the masses whom they conveniently continue to claim, legitimises their hegemony through democratic processes. The middle class on the other hand appealed to meritocracy as the justification of their newfound privileges. However, this lack of authenticity in the way each group has located itself negates the very principles of *Ubuntu*, which demand that we locate ourselves in an Afrocentric historical context and use that context in re-entering and redefining ourselves in our new historical contexts. What these hegemonic elites have conveniently set aside are the authentic historical inequalities and imbalances that have ushered them into privileged historical realities that the masses could not participate in, by virtue of their particularities, individualities and historicities. Postcolonial Zimbabwe's failure to observe the need to respect, individuality, particularity, historicity and belonging renders it incapable of creating a context where *Ubuntu* social justice is possible.

9.5: Conclusion.

We began by asking two key questions that are the fulcrum of this thesis. Firstly, whether the EFA policy in Zimbabwe reflects *Ubuntu* social justice? Secondly, whether by implementing this policy the

government has succeeded in making Zimbabwe's education more socially just. An analysis of the Zimbabwean educational reforms' experience has highlighted three key lessons. Firstly, that the EFA policy shift adopted in 1980 was informed by a desire to redress the inherited inequalities and imbalances from the colonial regime. The policy shift resulted in rapid expansion to the education system that scored success in increasing enrolment figures particularly in primary and secondary education, achieved racial as well as a level of gender equality particularly in primary and secondary education and high levels of literacy, one of the best for a 'developing' country (Ansell, 2003; Jansen, 1991). I have argued in this and the previous chapter, that the human rights foundations (Zvobgo, 1981, 1986) of the EFA policy are consistent with an *Ubuntu* informed theory of social justice. The 'progress' made as far as access and expansion are concerned, reflects *Ubuntu* social justice. However, this was access to and expansion of the same colonial education system that had already been condemned as socially unjust (Ansell, 2003) echoes of the argument expressed by Jansen (1991).

Secondly, Dzvimbo's (1991) characterisation of Zimbabwe's war of liberation as a passive revolution offered some explanations as to why the gains of the first decade of independence were unsustainable, both socio –economically and ideologically. The failure of the revolution to dismantle the colonial structures meant that whatever the new government, was building, was built on the wrong foundations (colonial infrastructure). The economic power dynamics obtaining in postcolonial Zimbabwe, compounded by the conflicted ideological positions between the former and the new state, and an ideologically ambivalent majority was a recipe for continued jostling and conflict as each group sought to protect its interests. This socio-economic and political malaise created conducive breeding grounds for the perpetuation of inequality and social injustice. With the same colonial socio- economic, political and cultural binaries in existence, *Ubuntu* social justice remained but a pipe dream.

We argued that the main problem with the EFA policy formulation and implementation was that it was highly centralised and did not take the masses with it. This 'state centred approach' (Moyo & Modiba, 2013) meant that a 'true' *Ubuntu* model of engaging all stake holders to the development of a new system of education build on mutual interests and consensus was missed. While the masses had always wanted educational access for their children it is questionable whether they were ever interested in ideological change from a capitalist mode of production to a socialist one. In a way, the demise of socialism in the 1990s might have created an escape route for the ruling elite most of whom had questionable ideological allegiances in the first place (Dzvimbo, 1991). *Ubuntu* social justice is built on respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging, all of which appear to be absent from the way the EFA policy was implemented. In the absence of these tenets, *Ubuntu* social justice could not be achieved no matter how successful the government had been in implementing the EFA policy.

I also argued that the biggest threat to *Ubuntu* social justice in education is the continued diminishing resources to fund the EFA programme. The socio-economic and political infrastructure are such that as long as the government has policies whose implementation require approval from external multi-lateral financial institutions such as IMF, World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and other NGOs, EFA will remain a distant reality. This is because these are organisations developed as part of the unfolding of Western civilisation of which coloniality is constitutive. *Ubuntu* demands that all stake holders be treated as subjects (Asante, 1998); yet in Zimbabwe's education system most of the people are only perceived as recipients of EFA, rather than being at the centre of that policy initiative. It is for this reason that I have recommended a radical review to the education system where *Ubuntu* theory of social justice is at the centre and *abantu* are subjects not objects in the reform process. The entire education system should be underpinned by *Ubuntu* philosophy as its philosophy of Education. Such a philosophy would become the glue that keeps the different elements of the policy together hence sustainable over time.

Chapter 10

Limitations and Recommendations.

10.1: Limitations.

Like any research project limited in scope, this thesis is limited by the word count in terms of the details to which some important aspects of the research could have been discussed. Given that this research has focussed on the EFA policy as its subject of analysis, it is acknowledged here that this project could have benefitted from a more in-depth review of the policy in terms of its qualitative impact on Zimbabwe's education system. While some review documents have been consulted in this light, such a review lay outside the focus of this research and therefore could not be analysed in depth. There is therefore a need to carry out, not only a literature review of such evaluative reports, but more importantly to carry out a qualitative evaluation which focusses on the impact of this policy shift both to the education system and the impact of the resultant education system on the community.

Another limitation of this research is ironically, what could be its strength. In this research I have adopted Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM). I have deliberately, avoided using Euro-Western research methods and this I argued to be a legitimate approach given that I have focussed on a topic that is specific to the people of Zimbabwe who define themselves as *abantu*. The limitation of this approach is that I am doing this research within an institutional context that predominantly, uses Euro-Western methodologies as its indigenous methodological positioning. My approach can therefore be perceived as incongruent with the research traditions within which I am studying and examined. This also speaks of the extent to which different research traditions are understood to be mutually exclusive. Although I have used an Afrocentric methodology, Reviere (2001) and Mazama (2001) argue that the language used in Eurocentric methodologies are tied to the ideologies that

inform them, making it difficult to avoid some methodological terms and concepts when researching in a Euro-Western context. A limitation of this project may be the use of Eurocentric language to define Afrocentric epistemologies and ontologies. While this is a limitation of applying an Afrocentric perspective in a Euro-Western context, it is a demonstration of how epistemic violence is perpetuated within academia through language and epistemology (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

As argued in chapter two, every research methodology has its limitations and an *Ubuntu* methodology as an interpretive device is no exception. Also, given that this methodology relies on the success to which I have defined the concept of *Ubuntu* and the theory of social justice informed by *Ubuntu*, it is equally possible that a different understanding of the concept of *Ubuntu* might yield a different theory of social justice, hence a different interpretive device. I therefore acknowledge that the theory of social justice adopted in this research is not the only possible understanding of this concept but rather one that addresses the identified central tenets of *Ubuntu*.

Finally, this research has relied predominantly on secondary data in so far as the research has not collected primary quantitative or qualitative data (as is commonly understood in the Euro-Western methodologies). This research has predominantly been a desktop philosophical analysis of existing data. With a wider scope, it would have been beneficial to use IRMs to collect data on people's perceptions of the EFA policy and its impact on social justice issues in postcolonial education in Zimbabwe. Such a relational data collection method as 'talking circles' (Chilisa, 2012) would have developed rich data, particularly on the link between *Ubuntu* understandings of social justice and the extent to which the EFA policy has addressed colonial imbalances and inequalities discussed in chapter five.

I am however, convinced that this research has succeeded in developing a new way (methodologically) of understanding the post-colonial policy shift in Zimbabwe. The adopted methodology also succeeded in analysing the EFA policy and generated enough qualitative data to

make a meaningful and indeed an original contribution to this discourse. What follows are some of the implications and recommendations drawn from this research.

10.2: Recommendations.

Throughout this thesis I have maintained a departure from linear research methodologies arguing for the adoption of a cyclical, recursive and therefore layered approach to data collection, analysis and discussions. While mindful of the fact that I might appear to be stepping into additional theoretical territory, these recommendations are pertinent in the spirit of this thesis and remain equally sensitive and ‘true’ to my methodological and stylistic approach. As such these recommendations are therefore the last layer which draws from what has been established throughout, to make sense of what can be done to make Zimbabwe’s education system more socially just. Here I use both deductive and inductive logic premised on the layers of data in previous chapters.

Driven by a quest for social justice in Zimbabwe’s education system, in this thesis I have identified areas that need to be addressed as prerequisites if *Ubuntu* social justice is to become a realistic possibility. While it is a historical fact that 39 years have lapsed since Zimbabwe attained independence, this research has shown that the inequalities that characterised the education sector then, are still prevalent in present day Zimbabwe. As such the recommendations proffered here are as relevant today as they would have been in 1980. I am therefore suggesting that it is time the government of Zimbabwe implemented educational reforms that would have seen a socially just education system being developed in Zimbabwe.

10.2.1: The need for an *Ubuntu* informed review of the education system.

We need to recognise that *Ubuntu* social justice must be centred in its socio-economic, political and historical context. As Asante (1998), Chilisa (2012) and others would advise, re-establishing the

centrality of who we are as *abantu* is a pre-requisite and foundational to whatever else we want to construct going forward. I want to contend however, that this re-establishment of the centrality of *Ubuntu* cannot ignore our historicity, particularly, our colonial historicity and our new sense of belonging.

It has been argued throughout this thesis that one of the difficulties, and indeed barriers to making Zimbabwe's post-colonial society more socially just was that Zimbabwe underwent a passive revolution (Dzvimbo, 1991). The inherited socio-economic and political structures constrained the new State in its effort to 'fully' implement the EFA programme. The fact that economic power resided with those who were responsible for creating the inherited inequalities meant that a lot more effort was needed from the government either to persuade them in their quest to redress those inequalities or for the new government to make the tough decisions of dismantling what the revolution had failed to dismantle. As it turned out, that is what the government had to do with the land reforms at the turn of the century (albeit in a haphazard and economically damaging way. It becomes clear therefore that by failing to complete the revolution the government aborted the vision of creating and ushering in a socially just education system in Zimbabwe. The continued neo-liberal coloniality manifesting as humanitarian interventions have continued to mask deep seated ontological and epistemological oppression reminiscent of the colonial era.

My recommendation therefore is that there is need for an 'all stakeholders' (government, civil society, business professionals etc.) review of the education system with a precise objective of redressing the imbalances that were inherited and have since been perpetuated by subsequent post-independence governments. An adoption of *Ubuntu* philosophy and *Ubuntu* principles of social justice would help in steering the focus of the review and dictate what outcomes are sought, after the review process. If an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice is adopted as the review and analytical framework, this would also mitigate and counter the pitfall the state fell into soon after independence, where those in government ended up pursuing their individual interests (contrary to

Ubuntu logic) at the expense of most of the people of Zimbabwe. We must also note that in 1999 the government did institute a commission of enquiry into the education of Zimbabwe (Ndziramanga Commission, 1999), however, since that was a government driven commission, they still had the hegemonic power to overlook the recommendations of this enquiry as they did not suit their interest at the time. What I am recommending is an independent enquiry whose recommendations should be binding to all stakeholders. Since *Ubuntu* philosophy advocates for servant leadership (*Inkosi yinkosi ngabantu*; translated as, a king is a king through and by the people), whoever has political power would be serving the needs of those who have bestowed that power rather than the other way round. If, however, there is no appetite for such radical reforms and an *Ubuntu* framework is perceived to be utopian; what others have termed a post-colonial narrative of return (Matolino & Kwindigwi, 2013), then the following should be considered. In what follows, I look at how the education system can be reformed by identifying specific issues whose transformation would equally have a lasting impact on both the structural and ideological legacies of colonial education.

10.3: Focussing on specific social justice issues.

My recommendation under 10.2.1 is a structural one. I am arguing that the current education system was built on a structurally socially unjust foundation. Consequently, it is inevitable that the outcomes of that system would be socially unjust. Given that *Ubuntu* theory of social justice as defined in this work acknowledges respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging; I am mindful of the fact that there are those who would be uncomfortable with a structural dismantling of the system and yet would be happy with a more piecemeal approach to the redress of the imbalances. Again, since *Ubuntu* advocates for consensus, it might be much easier to reach consensus looking at individual issues than dismantling the whole system. It is out of this consideration that I make the following recommendations.

10.3.1: The need to change the way schools are funded.

There is ample evidence from different evaluative reports referenced throughout this thesis, that the way schools are funded in Zimbabwe has been partly responsible for perpetuating the inherited inequalities and imbalance in the many different types of schools we have in the country (SIDA, 1990; UNESCO, 1993, 1994, 2001; UNICEF, 1997). As discussed in chapter five, in 1980 the new government inherited a school system that was skewed in favour of the white minority (World Bank, 1980, 1998; GOZ (1984) Annual Report for the Secretary for Education). This meant that all former white schools were well resourced and staffed, relative to all other schools particularly those in rural areas and black townships. Yet at independence the government continued to fund the schools per child regardless of where that child was placed. Such a funding metric meant that a rural child would receive the same funding as a child in a former white school. It is this funding system, insensitive to the historical imbalances that have perpetuated inequalities and helped to create a class system amongst *abantu*.

My recommendation is that funding should reflect historical imbalances. Given that 39 years have passed since independence, there is need for all schools in the country to be evaluated infrastructurally, to determine the state of each school. This must then be followed by the development of a new funding system that separates recurrent expenditure from capital expenditure. All schools that are in geographically impoverished areas need to receive additional capital funding. This will capacitate them in developing the infrastructure that will allow children in these areas, parity of educational experience with children from anywhere else in the country. Also, recurrent expenditure should take cognisance of the socio-economic background of the children. Generally, children attending schools in the former white schools are from families that are relatively affluent and can afford to support the education of their children with additional funds. As such there must be a difference in funding between children in such schools compared to children from poorer backgrounds, whose parents are unable to contribute financially to the education of these

children. Where there are anomalies in this general analysis then the government must put safeguards so that such disadvantaged children can apply for that additional funding. The aim of this recommendation is to ensure that a child's educational opportunities are not determined by their socio-economic background. Such a funding system is also underpinned by a recognition that *Ubuntu* is underpinned by 'belonging' (Molefe, 2017); consequently, a child should not be forced to leave their community to get a good education elsewhere. Rather, the community must educate every child in a manner that inculcates the importance of belonging and invoke a sense of pride and desire to continue contributing to their community, whatever that contribution might be.

10.3.2: The need to address gender imbalances across the education sector.

Gender imbalance remains a social justice issue in Zimbabwe's education system as in other sectors. In chapter eight we observed that while there is a paucity of literature on gender equality in Zimbabwe, the available statistical reports and anecdotal observations reveal that girls are underrepresented in higher sectors of the education system. UNICEF's analysis of education in Zimbabwe (1996, 2015) reveal that tertiary education continue to be dominated by males. Statistical reports show that more girls dropout of school at all levels compared to boys (SIDA, 1990, 2015; Gordon, 1995a; UNICEF, 1996). Dorsey (1996) noted that in overall terms, girls have underperformed relative to boys and this has affected their transition rates into higher education.

My recommendation therefore, is that there is need for in-depth qualitative research in Zimbabwe's education system as most of the data available tends to be quantitative statistical reports or reviews commissioned by NGO's in evaluating the impact of their programmes. What is lacking is in-depth analysis and reflections on these statistics. Such research and analysis would help build understanding of the inherent structures and processes that have perpetuated gender inequalities in education. It is well argued (Gordon, 1994, 1995a, 1995b; Dorsey, 1996) that culturally, Zimbabwe remains patriarchal, and this has had impact on decisions made about the education of girls.

However, as already discussed in chapter eight, we also know that with general levels of education rising and more than half the adult population in Zimbabwe having lived or travelled abroad due to harsh economic conditions at home, there has been some shift in cultural norms, beliefs and attitudes toward the role of women. The fact that at primary school level, parity in enrolment of boys and girls has almost been reached is indicative of the fact that greater access has been achieved and attitudes are also changing even amongst the poor (Gordon, 1995a, 1995b; Nyagura & Mupawaenda, 1996). Unfortunately, this is predominantly anecdotal information. It is therefore imperative that in-depth research is conducted that will provide understanding of the causes of gender inequalities and inform the design and implementation of interventions to ensure that our education system becomes more socially just. Such research would also inform the crafting of a formal, coherent national gender policy to replace the piecemeal reforms that have so far characterised government's approach in addressing the most glaring inequalities.

10.3.3: The need for a more inclusive education system for children with SEND.

EFA should, by its name, be inclusive education and yet very little has been done to ensure that those children with specific educational needs and disabilities are supported throughout their educational experience. One of the most obvious barriers to fully implementing inclusive education in Zimbabwe has been the lack of teachers with the requisite skills (Chimhenga, 2016) (see also the discussion on wider teacher training below). It is arguable that special education is a highly specialised area in teaching and learning and with the lack of resources for mainstream teaching and learning it is not surprising that the education system has lagged in this area. What is encouraging however, is the fact that Zimbabweans recognise the need for an inclusive education system as reflected in the constitution of Zimbabwe. (The New Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013).

My recommendation is that there is need for a radical change in the way schools are structurally constituted and the culture cultivated in the corridors of learning. This is because the inherited

system of education separated children with disabilities and educated them separately and teachers in mainstream schools were not trained to teach children with Special Educational Needs (Mafa, 2012). There is need to focus on the training of teachers and investing more resources to lift the status of children with disabilities and create a more positive and supportive environment to promote inclusivity. As argued elsewhere, this is about the ontological status of people with disabilities.

There is also a need for research to fully understand the challenges faced by teachers in their attempt to implement inclusive education in mainstream schools. What does *Ubuntu* tell us about the contribution of those children with learning difficulties? For instance, what are the barriers to the implementation of inclusive education? What guidance can be offered to all classroom practitioners on best practice in working with children with Special Educational Needs? What strategies are required to change inherent socio-cultural attitudes in pupils, parents and teachers? These are some of the questions that need to be addressed if *Ubuntu* inclusive education is to become a norm in all classrooms. It is important to note that the CIET (1999) noted that inclusive education was not fully understood and pupils with disabilities were still blamed by their teachers and fellow pupils for their underachievement. Given that the recommendations of this Commission were not implemented, it follows that the situation has not improved despite the country being signatory to the EFA initiative. There is also a need for a mandatory policy and legislation on inclusion that will empower schools and teachers to directly address inclusive education. Such legislation would also trigger budgetary allocations to train and equip teachers to fully address the barriers that have so far hampered the full implementation of an inclusive education.

10.3.4: The need for a balance between quantity and quality of provision.

One of the obvious challenges of the rapid educational expansion in independent Zimbabwe was always going to be, managing the balance between quantity and quality of provision. In chapter

eight we noted that one of the unintended consequences of opening the education system was the continued decline in the quality of education as reflected in both student experiences and the results (Maravanyika, 1990; Dzvimbo, 1991; Mehrotra, 1998; Gatawa, 1999). For example, in 2010 the Ministry of education reported that the national pass rate at GCE 'O' level had declined to 40% from between 60% and 70% in previous years. While there is no direct co-relation between the implementation of the EFA policy and the decline in the results, this development can be directly attributed to the general education policy direction. While there are other variables such as the general economic decline, it is still arguable that the expansion of the education system under the EFA policy in the early years of independence meant that these gains were not sustainable overtime, particularly post 1990 when the ESAP was introduced (Ota, 1995; Kanyongo, 2005; Mubika and Bukaliya, 2011). One of the EFA goals is to improve the quality of education in direct response to the observed decline in the quality of education due to rapid expansions.

To meet this goal, two issues must be addressed as pre-requisites otherwise all the gains made are at risk. It has been argued that the quality of teaching and learning is influenced by the quality of teachers as they are the main drivers of quality in the classroom. As such, there is need to investigate the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes and the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of all teachers. It has been suggested that the quality of any education system is as good as its teachers (Ball, 2000; Carter, 2015). I assert here, that one of the main problems is to do with the financing of ITT and CPD programmes. As such it is imperative that more cost-effective models are adopted to reduce the overall cost of delivering a high-quality education for all children. The current free market model of encouraging and promoting the development of private schools and staffing them with the 'best', well trained and experienced teachers is counterproductive as it only serves to perpetuate inequalities between social classes.

Secondly there is need to find ways of keeping the most competent and experienced teachers in the schools that need them the most. This could be done through promoting those teachers to higher

grades but keeping them in the classroom to mentor and train the unqualified and newly qualified teachers deployed in their schools. Developing a more robust mentoring programme would ensure that in each school there are teaching and learning experts (at senior leadership grade, but in the classroom) who can develop capacity amongst the less qualified but also quality assure teaching and learning in those schools. This approach would also be consistent with *Ubuntu* philosophy as it advocates for a less top down approach to CPD and quality assurance of teaching and learning. Teachers would take more ownership of their development and set their own goals with regards to what is achievable within their setting. Being led by their peers in this developmental journey would remove the hegemonic power dynamics that are contrary to the spirit of *Ubuntu*. The Ndebele saying, *indlela ibuzwa kwabaphambili* (if you want to know the direction to a place ask those who have been) speaks of the importance of mentoring and coaching embedded in ubuntu epistemology.

10.3.5: The need for a relevant curriculum.

In chapter nine, under section 9.2.1, I discussed the challenges associated with attempting to reform the curriculum. I highlighted the new government's awareness of the folly of retaining the colonial education system particularly given its centrality to people's aspirations during the liberation struggle. I cited Chung & Ngara (1985) who condemned colonial education as racist, elitist, Eurocentric, competitive, individualistic, and capitalist oriented; characteristics anathemic to *Ubuntu* social justice. Yet Jansen (1991) alerts us to the fact that despite this clarity and the new government's specific espoused curriculum goals, there is evidence of greater continuity with the colonial curriculum than the reforms that would have been envisaged based on the scientific socialist ideology. I am not arguing for a socialist ideology as even that is still an alternative within a Euro-Western system, but not an option for Ubuntu. Instead I am highlighting the government's failure within its chosen ideological path.

In the Foreword to the Curriculum Review Process: Narrative Report (2014 – 2015), the then Minister of Primary and Secondary Education and Culture (MoPSE), Dr. L. D. K. Dokora acknowledges that the CIET (1999) had been the first opportunity for Zimbabwe to review the education system as inherited from the colonial regime, more so, given the democratisation of the education and Training policy in 1980. However, given that the recommendations of the CIET (1999) were not implemented, this was a missed opportunity to underpin the education system with *Ubuntu* philosophy. The CIET (1999) had identified that the curriculum as inherited and expanded lacked national values or philosophy amongst other limitations. These national values or philosophy is, *Ubuntu*. Underpinning Zimbabwe's entire education system with *Ubuntu* philosophy as the philosophy of education, would have guided the curriculum designers towards an *Ubuntu* informed education system leading to its transformation into a more socially just system of education.

It is therefore imperative that to preserve the gains made through the policy shift to EFA, there is need to review the curriculum and make it vocational; giving students the skills they need to create employment and be self-employed (Jansen, 1991; Ansell, 2003). In a small economy as Zimbabwe has, the culture of education should shift to the development of skills and attitudes that empower young people towards self-employment rather than dependence on the shrinking job market. There is also a need to review the curriculum to focus on those sectors that are the backbone of the economy such as mining, agriculture, tourism, the construction industry, the financial services, technology and the arts; to name just a few. The development and cultivation of practical skills in these sectors is what would make education desirable amongst young people as they would see the direct benefits of education to their day to day lives, whether employed or self-employed. We should remember that *Ubuntu* education before its violent encounter with colonial education was always centred on empowering young people to fully participate as subjects in the community to which they belonged. To the contrary colonial education alienated children from their communities.

While an attempt to do so was made through the CIET (1999), there was lack of political will to make this a reality and two decades have passed since that frivolous attempt. An *Ubuntu* driven approach would be based on consensus after consultations with all stakeholders and then building the recommendations into curriculum reforms. The community must own the curriculum if parents are to commit to ensuring that their children fully participate. Such an *Ubuntu* driven curriculum reform process would be an *abantu* (people) curriculum for *abantu*, allowing people to address their social justice issues in the process. *Ubuntu* social justice advances the need to have indigenous knowledge systems at the centre of the curriculum.

10.3.6: The need to place schools at the heart of every community.

Predicated on the centrality of being, becoming and belonging in *ubuntu* ontology, epistemology and axiology (Chilisa, 2012; Molefe, 2017) my final recommendation is that schools should be at the heart of every community.

Schools should not exclusively be places where children go to learn, but rather as the focal point for community engagement and collective learning, development and community building. These must be places where resources are to be found for everything that pertains to the development of that community. They should be resource centres, where children come for their curriculum learning at set times but the whole community always comes. The school must be made relevant to the needs of the community where it is located. This is even more acute for 'developing' countries like Zimbabwe where resources are limited and therefore sharing whatever is available would improve that community's quality of life. There is need to mobilise all development partners to support and fund educational resources at all levels. The improvement of the quality of these 'community hubs' as schools might be called, would make education relevant and improve the retention of both teachers and pupils. Parents and teachers should work together in addressing the educational needs not only of the pupils enrolled at the school but of the community including the needs of 'school leavers'. The participation of the whole community in whatever is happening at a school would

transform not only the school, but the community's perceptions on what the school is for. Once again, an *Ubuntu* conceptualisation of the school would not separate the school from other elements of what it means to be community. Dependence and interdependence (Chilisa, 2012) dictates that the school cannot exist as a separate entity from the community to which it belongs. The school should not be perceived as belonging to the government, but rather belonging to the community. It is this hegemonic top down governmental approach to education that has continued to militate against the impact of the EFA programme. Epistemic freedom should be restored to both the community and its schools. As such what I am recommending is just a return to *Ubuntu* education with the school as its 'modern' focal point.

10.4: Conclusion.

In this thesis I submit two broad approaches in terms of recommendations. Firstly, I argued that the colonial educational foundations to the education system are flawed and as such whatever is constructed on these foundations will always fail to address *Ubuntu* social justice issues. I suggested that ideally, the education system needs a complete overhaul based on an *Ubuntu* informed theory and philosophy of Education. Such a review should address some of the fundamental questions pertaining to the purpose of education. Since purpose precedes design, it follows that an *Ubuntu* informed system of education would lead to a socially just education system since social justice is part of what it means to be *Umntu (person)* as argued in chapters three and four.

However, being mindful of our historicity (which include colonialism) and *Ubuntu's* respects for consensus, such a radical recommendation might not find consensus amongst *abantu*. I have therefore proffered an alternative, social justice issues-based approach to educational reforms. As discussed above, each of these issues would easily draw consensus amongst the people and once *Ubuntu* social justice principles of respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging are applied, a journey towards a socially just education system would have begun. This again will be

consistent with an already well-argued concept (chapter three & four) that *Ubuntu* social justice is being, becoming and belonging.

Chapter 11

General Conclusion.

11.1: Conclusion.

Throughout this thesis *Ubuntu* has been conceptualised as a communitarian African philosophy of being, while acknowledging that this specific term has its origins in Southern Africa of which Zimbabwe is part. *Ubuntu* is a philosophy of being that is founded on a relational ontology and epistemology where both being and knowing are located and centred within a collective rather than an individualistic approach. As such it speaks to the interdependence, interconnectedness, reciprocity and mutuality of human beings and their environments (Gyekye, 1995; Chilisa, 2012; Oviawe, 2016; Molefe, 2017). Consequently, I have argued that *Ubuntu* social justice should not be construed as an attribute of an individual but rather what makes both the individual and the community be and become a human community. A community of *abantu* is identified as such through the quality and value of the relationships characteristic of both the individual members and the community to which they belong. A socially just community is a community where the individuals no longer needs to claim their individual rights against the collective good, simply because those same rights are safeguarded and promoted by the community. An individual thus only claims his/her rights against the community when the community has failed to promote these rights and therefore respect for particularity, individuality and belonging has been undermined.

Education as that institution through which and by which the community cultivates and promotes relationality, respect for Self and Other, respect for individuality, particularity, historicity, a sense of belonging and interdependence within a communal framework, must therefore be socially just. A socially just education system is therefore, a necessary though not sufficient condition for the

cultivation of *Ubuntu* as argued throughout this thesis. This is because *Ubuntu* as a philosophy of being goes beyond education into every sphere of being, belonging and becoming.

Ubuntu as a philosophy of education offers the critical tools to reflect on both pre-colonial and post-colonial education systems amongst *abantu*. The reproduction and perpetuation of colonial education in Zimbabwe has fostered both neo-colonialism and neoliberal coloniality. By failing to transform the education system in line with *Ubuntu* philosophy, the government of Zimbabwe has continued to privilege Euro-Western knowledge systems above indigenous ones, thereby allowing colonial interests to be advanced at the expense of local interests and needs. It is my conviction that a socially just education system in Zimbabwe is possible if it is built on the foundations of *Ubuntu* philosophy. I posit that *Ubuntu* philosophy should be understood as an option to modernity/coloniality. This is because Western civilisation which has been the foundations of colonial systems of education are inherently colonising when applied to non-Western contexts (Mignolo, 2011). By building on *Ubuntu* philosophy as the foundational transformative launch pad, the Zimbabwean education system can truly achieve its quest for social justice. An education system that brings back the 'soul' into the classroom and thus into society.

The saying "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" was used throughout this thesis as the defining principle for communality, interdependence and interconnectedness within an *Ubuntu* worldview. It is this same principle that must underpin individual and collective identities if Zimbabweans (as a formally colonised people) are to reclaim their ontological and epistemological status as *abantu* participating as equals to other civilisations in a globalised world. With both its relational ontological and epistemological orientation, *Ubuntu* philosophy of being would re-centre both identity and meaning making within a communalistic frame as opposed to an individualistic Euro-Western one. It is this sense of the collective reciprocity, interdependence and mutuality that would transform not only the education system but would also underpin what can be regarded as excellence in our educational outcomes.

One of the 'darker side' of an individualistic worldview, lacking in *Ubuntu*, particularly in poor communities has been the proliferation of corruption. In socio-economic conditions of scarcity and poverty, individualism makes people susceptible to corruption. This view echoes Assie-Lumumba (2000) who alerts us to the negative impacts of systems of education that are imported without any considerations for African philosophies. Such externally designed and pre-packaged and delivered systems and frameworks have proved pernicious to the overall development of African nations. If Lumumba's observations are valid, and we also recognise that children are the future of Zimbabwe's development and advancement, then it is imperative that the education sector should be that arena that re-centring of Zimbabwe's needs must begin.

In my analysis of the EFA policy in Zimbabwe I have drawn the conclusion that in taking an audit of the colonial legacy, Zimbabwe has but a negative balance sheet in all aspects of her relationship with the Conceptual West. Education has been hit the hardest as the impact will be felt for generations to come. It is therefore imperative that the education sector is transformed if future generations are to begin to develop a healthier relational balance sheet with the Western world. Once again, an *Ubuntu* philosophy will not only be to the advantage of Zimbabwe as *Ubuntu* advocates for mutuality in all relationships. Once we recognise our dependence and interdependence, then naturally the moral imperative kicks in, necessitating that we relate in a mutually beneficial way. I also contend that in an *Ubuntu* informed education system, the education of children at all levels will be equally important and can never be perceived as a waste, as is currently the case. Since *Ubuntu* calls for the participation of all, to their ability and space, it follows that the poor, girls and those with disabilities (who are currently being excluded) will not be left to drop out as to do so will be depriving them and the rest of the community of their contribution. *Ubuntu* also demands the protection of the 'vulnerable' by the 'strong' (Chilisa, 2012). This is because in the 'true' spirit of *Ubuntu* any society is only as strong as its weakest members and as weak as its strongest. "I am because we are, and we are because I am" is the clarion cry. It is the outworking of this maxim that reflects *Ubuntu* philosophy as a praxis. Oviawe sums this point perfectly when arguing that;

[a]ttention, whether in the form of dismissal or “voluntary” dropout, cannot constitute any part of education for social progress as it ejects individuals and groups, especially the female population, that ought to be included in any development agenda (Oviawe, 2016, p. 4).

This thesis also underscores the place of ‘belonging’ in the discussion of the concept of *Ubuntu* and an *Ubuntu* informed theory of social justice. To be is to belong; this emphasises the importance of communality and interdependence as central to both individual and communal identities. The implications of this way of thinking is that an individual cannot succeed alone. Success is a collective concept, reflected in the pride of the family and the community when a child or member of that community achieves something. To reduce success to a personal and individual level is to miss the point of *Ubuntu*’s collective agency and the utility thereof (see appendix F). This however does not mean the individual child who achieves academically is undermined and not celebrated as successful, rather, such success is viewed or perceived as communal success because the community has contributed to the success of the individual. The saying “it takes a community to raise a child” is ‘true’ if and only if communality, interdependence and interconnectedness are reclaimed. It is this conceptualisation that is undermined by the idea of success and progress as competition which tilts the scale towards the individual as if the individual could have achieved the same without the contribution of the community. The idea of promoting the success of certain sections of the community at the expense of others is contrary to the spirit of *Ubuntu*.

The EFA policy as implemented in Zimbabwe has been used as an instrument for reproducing inequalities and imbalances reminiscent of the colonial era. Zimbabwe’s post-colonial education was ‘captured’ by the same international organisations that helped introduce EFA. These neo-liberal organisations together with their local partners have effectively pushed for the privatisation of education in Zimbabwe, resulting in it becoming the preserve of the rich while the poor remain excluded. The government has therefore failed to re-centre social justice despite the implementation of the EFA programme. The system is driven by individualism, where those who are privileged continue to take advantage of their privileges at the expense of the underprivileged. The reason for such a decentred approach is that *Ubuntu* social justice is not at the heart of the

education system as it should. An *Ubuntu* informed education system demands the deconstruction of, and the delinking from the modernist ontologies and epistemologies of the conceptual West. It calls for the introduction of an option to the logic of the colonial matrix of power. I am therefore suggesting that *Ubuntu* philosophy and an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice as developed in this thesis offers us that option. This option does not call for the closing of the epistemic space; rather it calls for its opening. Decolonising both the ontological and epistemological spaces to allow indigenous voices to speak and be heard from a valid, legitimate and functional knowledge system that is at par with other knowledge systems (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017). It is therefore imperative that an educational review informed by *Ubuntu* philosophy is undertaken as part of the re-centring process.

I want to conclude this thesis by revisiting the two Key questions of this research which are; firstly, whether the EFA policy in Zimbabwe reflects *Ubuntu* social justice? Secondly, whether by implementing this policy the government has succeeded in making Zimbabwe's education more socially just? Throughout my analysis I have argued that foundationally, the EFA policy is consistent with an *Ubuntu* theory of social justice. This is a useful observation when looking at how the EFA policy is premised on education as a human right. However, the question is, what is our understanding of rights? Is this a Euro-Western conceptualisation of rights or an Afro-communitarian expression? It seems to me that the first government of Zimbabwe and their international partners either deliberately or unknowingly failed to recognise the difference between these two conceptualisations. It is also possible that those who were behind the policy shift and implementation may have deliberately masked this crucial difference for political reasons. Either way, it is my submission that herein lies the problem. Built on a Euro-Western conceptualisation of individual rights, the EFA policy is built on a flawed foundation. While we can and indeed must find an understanding of rights in *Ubuntu* axiology and ontology, that must be made clear before assuming that it is consistent with Euro-Western understandings. While rights in the Western conceptualisation are individualistic and puts the individual ahead of the community, in an *Ubuntu* perspective, the community comes before the individual (Menkiti, 1984; Molefe, 2017). It is this

tension that needs negotiating if we are to find *Ubuntu* social justice in post-colonial education in Zimbabwe.

My submission in this thesis is that by adopting a Euro-Western conceptualisation of individual rights as the basis for the EFA policy the government of Zimbabwe together with its international partners erred. In so doing they negated *Ubuntu* social justice. Here I have argued that while in a Euro-Western context individual rights are given precedence (Nozick, 1974, 2013) in an Afro-communitarian context individual rights do not have the same normative status (Molefe, 2017). Instead there is need to negotiate the dynamic interplay between *Ubuntu's* desire to promote the common good and the rights of the individual (Gyekye, 1995). Such an understanding reveals that in an Afro-communitarian context where there is respect for particularity, individuality, historicity and belonging the aim is always to promote common good without jettisoning rights, a view also supported by Chilisa (2012). In this light therefore, the EFA policy is devoid of *Ubuntu* social justice in that it assumes individual rights to be absolute. Consequently, the implementation of the EFA policy in Zimbabwe has failed to make Zimbabwe's education system socially just despite the post-colonial government's recognition that education is a basic human right as enshrined in the constitution (Zimbabwe Constitution, 2013). While the unprecedented expansion and opening of the education system between 1980 and 1995 is commendable, such 'success' failed to address the social justice issues as defined under *Ubuntu* theory of social justice proffered in this thesis.

Finally, I conclude this thesis by positing that, there is something that we learn from philosophies such as *Ubuntu*, which highlight our global interdependence. However, this global interdependence should not be derived from what Mignolo (2018, p. 1) calls '*[t]he mirage of universalism behind European localism*'. Rather, what is local to each place and space must be respected and allowed to sit at the table of knowledge exchange as both ontologically and epistemically legitimate. It is time to recognise that colonial education systems together with their skewed concepts of epistemic

superiority have been complicit in the perpetuation of unprecedented levels of cultural, social and economic inequalities characteristic of Zimbabwe as a post-colonial state. As we walk together in these foggy paths towards global futurity, it's time to recognise that none of us has the complete story and as such none of us can tell the story on behalf of others. Justice demands that all involved in this educational journey have the right to speak for themselves and from their perspective, without others claiming monopoly of what is epistemically valid. What Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) calls 'epistemic freedom'. *Ubuntu* social justice compels us to recognise that the idea of a single story of progress is colonising to those who do not share in this story and the sooner we recognise our collective enslavement, the better we are able to formulate new relationships which recognises our collective interdependence. An interdependence that recognises the plurality of options in our quest to confront the historical legacies of colonialism and the logic of coloniality that continues to eliminate the options we have in our quest for social justice in education. Within a polycentric rather than a Eurocentric world, *Ubuntu* is not necessarily the option, but rather an option. While *Ubuntu* is Afrocentric and located within a specific geographical location, I conclude that it is more of an ontological and epistemological concept than a geographical one.

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Appendices.

Appendix A: Transitional National Development Plan 1982/83 - 1984/85

Volume 2.

Education and Culture:

Government recognizes that education is a basic human right. It also recognizes that education is an investment in human capital which sustains and accelerates the rate of economic growth and socio-economic development. The challenge for educational development in Zimbabwe is not only one of redressing the educational, qualitative and quantitative imbalances in the inherited system but also that of meeting the exceedingly large new demands with limited resources.

Objectives and strategy

Government will endeavour to attain the following broad objectives:

- a) Develop curricula relevant to national socio-economic objectives, cultural ethos, intellectual and skill needs of Zimbabwe. To this end education will be linked closely to productive activities and manpower requirements of the Nation.
- b) Provide good quality universal, primary education.
- c) Within the fiscal constraints of a developing country, provide relevant secondary schooling to as many people as are required by the manpower needs of Zimbabwe's growing economy.
- d) Provide adequate tertiary education at university and teachers training colleges.
- e) Provide constant upgrading and supervision of teachers so as to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- f) Develop a strong non-formal education section which will enable those who were unable to pursue their education due to the policies of the past colonial administrations.
- g) Ensure that education is not only qualitatively improved but is as cost effective as possible so as to avoid the danger of the education service sectors depriving the productive and other sectors of essential investments.

Government will adopt the following strategy to attain the objectives stated above:

- a) Free tuition at primary level to enable all children to attend school.
- b) Extension of secondary education facilities to rural areas. Each district will have at least one government secondary school. Local authority and mission-schools will also be expanded to cope with the growing demand for secondary education. Greater emphasis will be placed on the development of rural day secondary schools as opposed to boarding schools as a means of providing

secondary education to larger numbers at affordable cost. However, boarding secondary schools will be developed where concentration of specialist personnel and equipment is essential, as for example, the senior secondary level.

c) Emphasis on the development of relevant curricula at all levels linked with the extension of distance education teaching methods in order to reach a wider clientele. Government aims to develop modular structured material for secondary school level so that opportunities for secondary education can be greatly expanded.

d) Emphasis on scientific, technical and productive education at all levels so that education can become a more effective factor in development. In this regard close links will be maintained between educational planning and curricula and the manpower requirements of the economy. Reform of the structure of education in order to enable Government to attain its objective more efficiently.

e) Streamlining and decentralizing education and administration in order to attain efficiency.

Programs.

Primary Schools:

Government generally expects parents and members of each community to contribute substantially to capital development of their primary schools. Therefore, no funds are directly earmarked for capital development of primary schools. For resettlement areas, however, capital development funds for primary schools will be provided under lands, resettlement, and rural development.

Secondary Education:

Forty Government rural secondary schools with at least one school for each district are planned over the plan period. Local authority and mission schools will also be expanded. A greater part of the expansion of secondary education will of necessity be in private secondary schools which Government will continue to support.

Teacher Education:

In 1981, the proportion of qualified teachers was nearly 25 percent of the total. The low proportion resulted from the doubling of enrolment at primary and secondary school levels. Government will attempt to rectify the situation through expansion of teacher training facilities over the plan period.

a) Zimbabwe Integrated National Training Education College (ZINTEC). This program was established in order to produce teachers through an accelerated and cost-effective training program.

b) Expansion of Teacher Training Colleges.

The following teacher training colleges are scheduled for expansion during the plan period; Hillside, Gweru, Mutare and Seke teacher training colleges as well as Andrew Louw Zintec Teachers College.

c) New Teacher Training Colleges:

New Colleges will be built in Belvedere (Harare), Chinhoyi, Gwanda and Rusape.

d) Education Service Center:

The center will comprise of the Zintec National Center and the Curriculum Development Center. Two other sections - culture and non-formal education will be expanded or come into existence during the plan period.

e) Housing for District Education Officers:

Government plans to improve the housing conditions for its district education officers.

f) The Culture Division: It is planned to establish a National Library and Documentation Services Center, 15 Culture Houses, a National School of Dancing and an Arts and Craft Center.

University of Zimbabwe

The University will embark on the following projects during the plan period;

- a) Expansion of residential accommodation.
- b) Construction of the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences.
- c) Extension of the University Library and tutorial facilities.

Source: Transitional National Development Plan 1982/83 - 1984/85 Volume 2, May 1983, Republic of Zimbabwe

Appendix B: “Growth with Equity”

“Growth with Equity” outlines the following education aims:

Education should enable Zimbabweans to acquire knowledge which will influence their attitudes, values and skills.

Education should act as an instrument for effecting pupil’s access to other basic human needs.

Education is expected to cover a wide spectrum in its content and form, yet at the same time imbued with local values and combined with practical knowledge of concrete conditions.

Education is expected to contribute to more rapid adoption of improved agricultural methods and higher productivity of the rural people.

Education was expected to contribute to the realization of the objectives of both the Three-Year National Transition Development Plan (1982/83 - 1984/85) and the First Five Year Development Plan (1985/86 - 1990/91) through the successful achievement of these goals of the Education and Manpower Development Sector:

(a) From the socio - political needs of Zimbabwe, the education system is intended to promote national unity, socialism, egalitarianism and patriotism.

(b) The cultural goals aim both at reviving the hitherto largely neglected languages and other cultural values and at developing a distinct Zimbabwe way of life out of the mutual recognition and enrichment of the diverse cultures.

(c) Education should contribute to national development, particularly economic development, through the supply of adequate cadres of trained and skilled personnel. On the one hand many skilled occupations were manned by Whites who have emigrated and by expatriates, and on the other the extension of services to the majority of the people and the expansion of the economy require a great number of skilled people. (d) In addition, education is regarded as a basic human right. It is made available partly to redress the colonial inequalities in the provision of education and also to satisfy a great national thirst for education.

In more specific terms, the intentions of the education system are:

(a) To provide education for all levels and including non-formal education and the eradication of illiteracy.

(b) To transform and develop the curriculum to make it more relevant to Zimbabwe's cultural, socio-economic and skilled manpower requirements. In this regard, emphasis would be placed on science, practical subjects, and greater use of local materials in the development of the curriculum.

To improve the quality and standards of learning and teaching.

To maintain the cost of education at a level the country can afford and obtain optimum efficiency and benefits from investments in education.

Appendix C: ZANU (PF) 1980 election manifesto.

ZANU (PF)'S principles for education were spelt out in its 1980 election manifesto:

1. The abolition of racial education and utilization of the education system to develop in the young a non-racial attitude, or common national identity and common loyalty.
2. The establishment of free and compulsory primary and secondary education for all children regardless of race.
3. The abolition of sex discrimination in the education system.
4. The orientation of the education system to national goals.
5. The basic right of every adult who had no or little education opportunity to literacy and adult education.
6. The special role of education as a major instrument for social transformation. The manifesto also identified three stages in the education system:

(1) Pre-school education: mainly of a nursery form for children aged 3 -5 years it would make it possible for the present long period of primary schooling to be reduced.

(2) Primary education: this will be pre- secondary and will build upon nursery education as it projects itself into the secondary sector. It should emphasize equally the development of literacy and psychomotor abilities and create in the child a comprehensive education base.

(3) Secondary education: this form of education will build itself upon the primary base and, while remaining comprehensive in character, must sharpen the child in the direction of his aptitudes. It should prepare children variously for university, technical and vocational courses."

Furthermore, ZANU(PF) promised to "launch a vast network of technical and vocational schools throughout the country and will establish Zimbabwe Institute of Technology, which will offer courses at university level" and also to "expand university education and to reorient it to the needs of the Zimbabwean nation, emphasizing more the courses necessary for the development of the country. University education should be largely free".

Appendix D: ZANU (PF)'S 1985 election manifesto.

ZANU (PF)'S 1985 election manifesto stated measures education was expected to take:

- (i) The curriculum will be transformed to take account of the need for industrialization.
- (ii) In particular, the curriculum will be transformed to a state in which technical subjects will be the core around which academic subjects revolve.
- (iii) Every child will be required to study technical subjects from primary school level, so that he/she leaves school technically and technologically prepared for the world of work.
- (iv) Teacher training, technical, vocational and higher educational institutions be increased having regard to equitable regional distribution.
- (v) The curriculum will be transformed to portray women's work as valuable, productive and necessary in the development of our own country.
- (vi) Aspects of curriculum writing at primary school level and in such areas as social studies etc. will be localized so that children do not become alienated from their own environment at too early an age.
- (vii) ZANU (PF) is determined to eradicate the scourge of illiteracy by the year 2000 and facilitate the participation of all adults in their village committees, co- operatives, trade unions, workers committees and other organs of development. The Party will continue to consolidate adult literacy programmes and health campaigns. This will enable the Party to enhance the literacy, health, technical and managerial skills of the people in order to accelerate the rate of socio- economic development in the country.

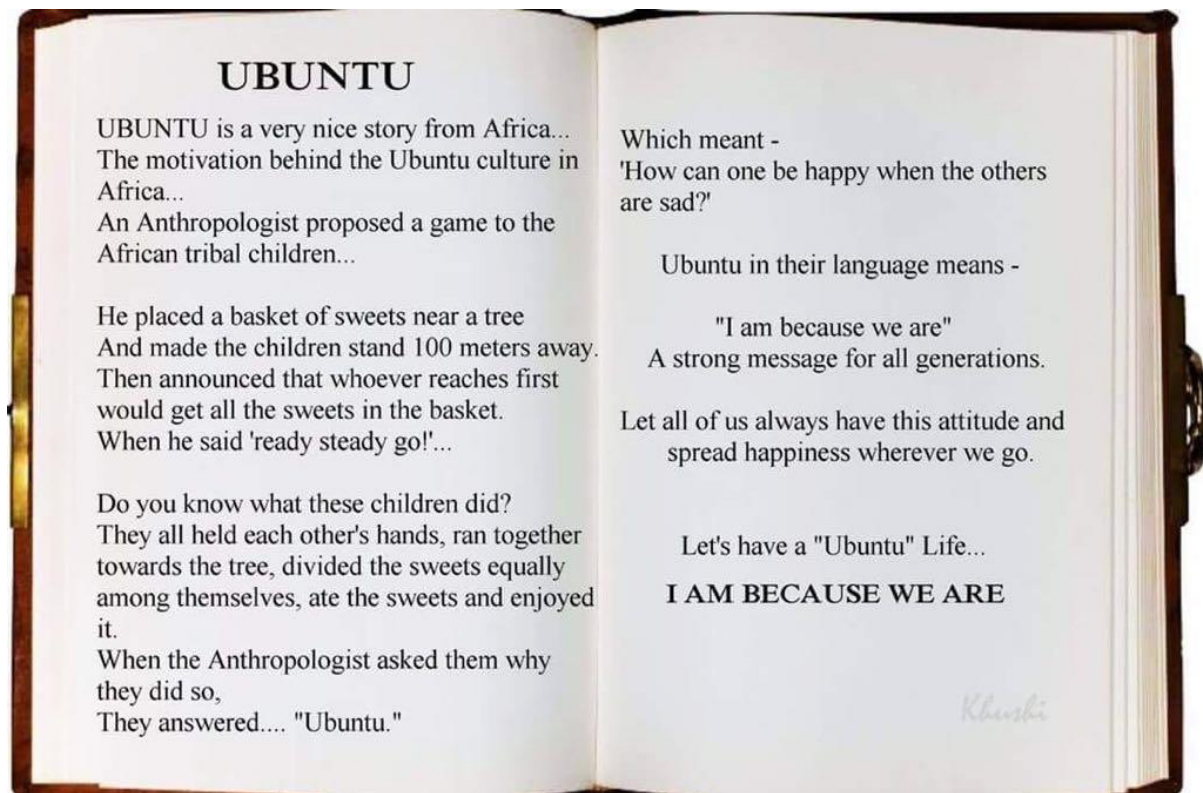
Appendix E: Education for All (EFA) Goals.

EDUCATION FOR ALL (EFA) GOALS (proposed dimensions)

1. Expansion of early childhood care and developmental activities, including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children;
2. Universal access to, and completion of, primary education (or whatever higher level of education is considered as "basic") by the year 2000;
3. Improvement in learning achievement such that an agreed percentage of an appropriate age cohort (e. g. 80% of 14 year- olds) attains or surpasses a defined level of necessary learning achievement;
4. Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to, say, one-half its 1990 level by the year 2000, with sufficient emphasis on female literacy to significantly reduce the current disparity between male and female illiteracy rates;
5. Expansion of provisions of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults, with programme effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural changes and impacts on health, employment and productivity;
6. Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living and sound and sustainable development, made available through all education channels including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication, and social action, with effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural change.

Source: UNESCO (April 1990) World Conference on Education for All. Meeting Basic Learning Needs
Jomtien, Thailand 5-9 March 1990

Appendix F: *Ubuntu*.



Source: Unknown.